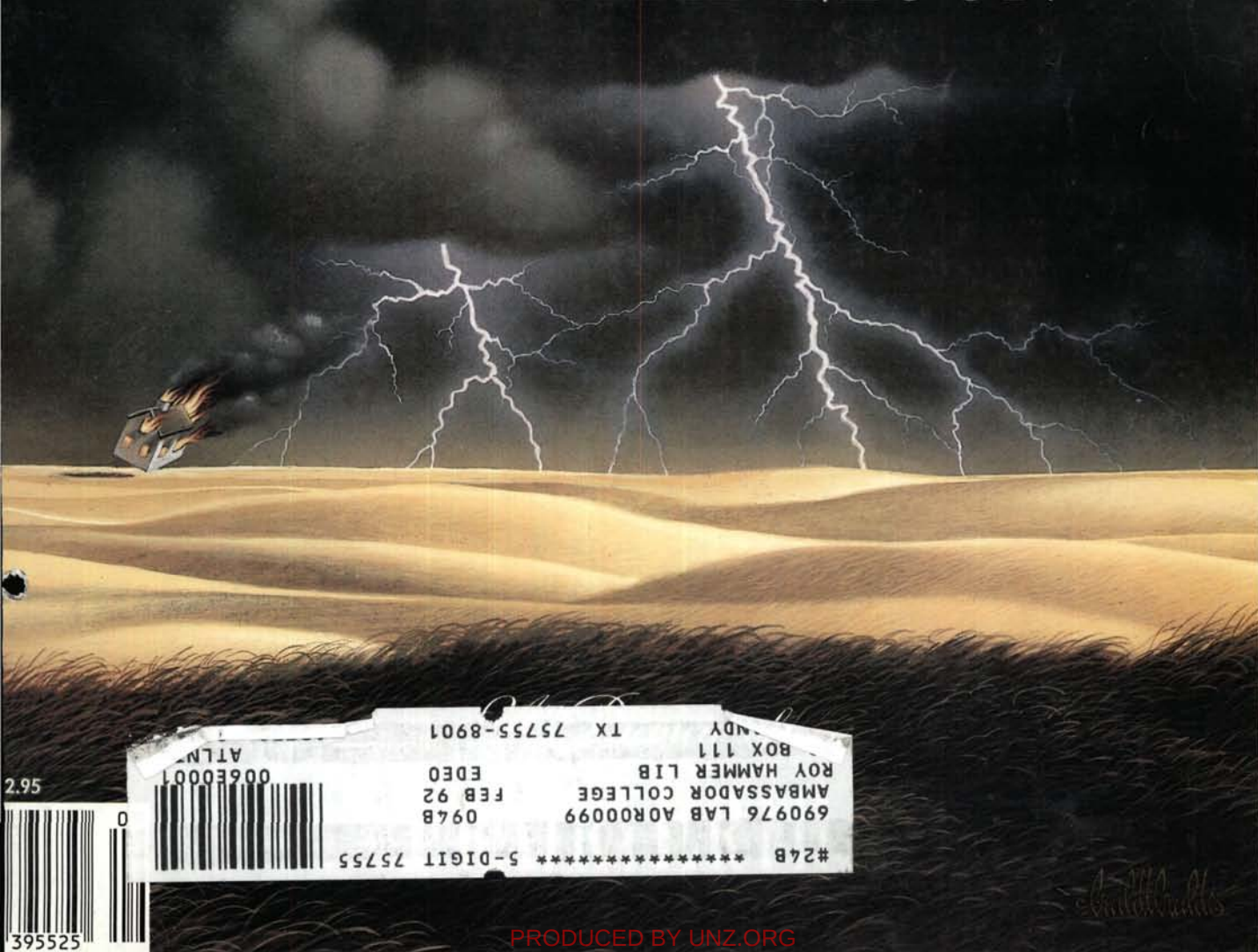


The Atlantic

THE RETURN OF "SEPARATE BUT EQUAL" / DECODING ANCIENT MAYA

Portraits From Tallgrass Country by

WILLIAM
LEAST HEAT-MOON



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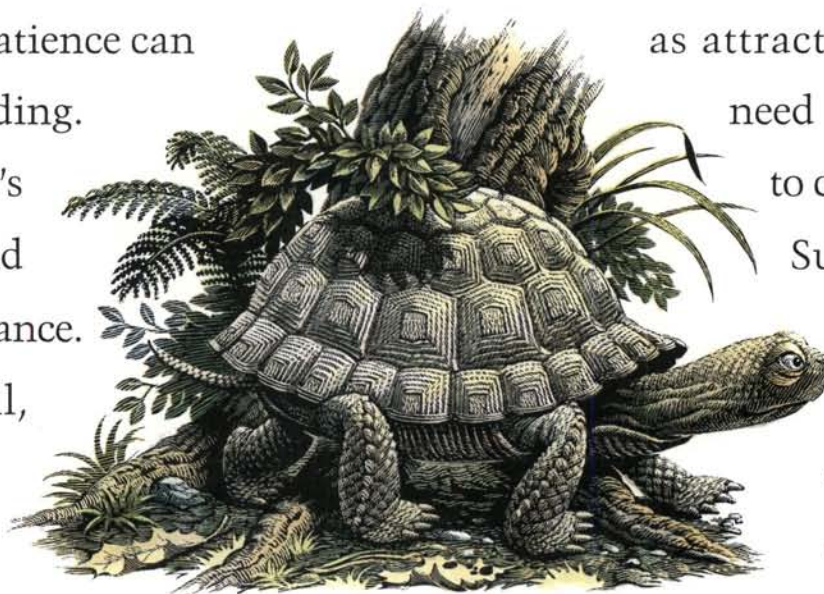
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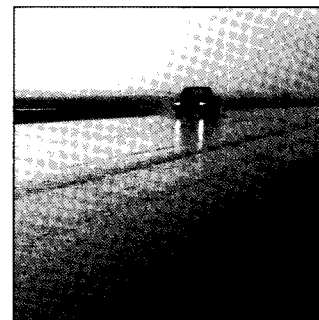
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The desegregation of Oklahoma City's schools in the 1970s, our correspondent writes, followed the familiar trajectory: "resistance, submission, racial tension, white flight, and peace, if not always harmony." But resegregation is now occurring in a very natural way, and some blacks, satisfied with their schools, wonder if this is necessarily a bad thing.
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In eight years of travels in Chase County, Kansas, the author learned a "prairie secret": "Take the numbing distance in small doses and gorge on the little details that beckon. The prairie doesn't give up anything easily, unless it's horizon and sky. Search out its variation, its colors, its subtleties." In taking his own advice he found that "the splendid lies within a plain cover." A report on the floods, tornadoes, tallgrass, cattle, and (most of all) people that have formed the county.

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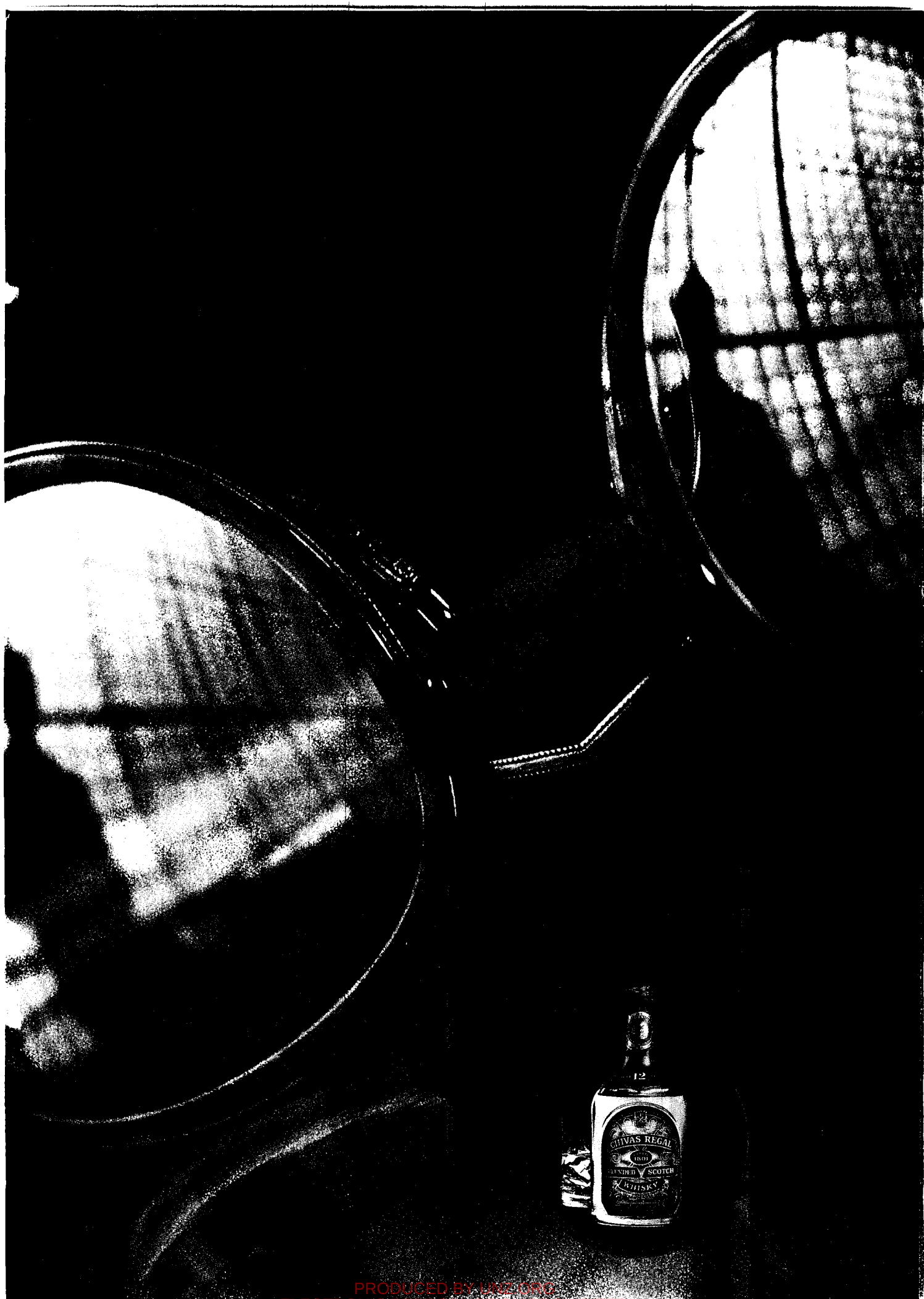
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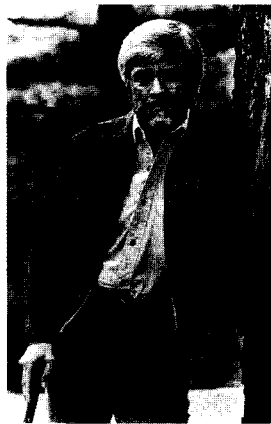
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745 BOYLSTON STREET

“WHAT NEED FOR a man to make a trip to Looking-glass, Oregon, when he’d been seeing his own image all across the length of the country?” William Least Heat-Moon asked in *Blue Highways*. Literature at its best anticipates reality. The journey chronicled in *Blue Highways* took place in 1978, but Heat-Moon’s book, previewed in the September, 1982, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*, anticipated some of America’s 1980s self-absorption. Now Heat-Moon is back with a selection of portraits from his second book, *PrairyErth*, which may rival *Blue Highways* in its ability to plumb the American situation. *PrairyErth*, which took twice as long to write (the author’s journeys for the book began in 1983), is a darker, deeper survey of mankind’s historical, ecological, and ethical position on the planet. By drawing a complex map of one isolated Kansas county, “the most easterly piece of the American Far West. . . the last remaining grand expanse of tallgrass prairie in America,” Heat-Moon moves *Atlantic* readers along the great circle they began with Henry David Thoreau in June of 1862: “Eastward I go only by force; but westward I go free. . . The West of which I speak is but another name for

the Wild; and what I have been preparing to say is, that in Wildness is the preservation of the world.” In the 129 years between these two writings *The Atlantic* has published scores of others that portray the westering of America. There were two, for example, in the August, 1897, issue. First: “Sloping down from a gentle hill toward a creek, the Kansas town shows at a distance its pointed steeples, its great iron water-tower, and its massive schoolhouse, which stands above the elms and cottonwoods and maples” (“A Typical Kansas Community,” by William Allen White). Second: “I suppose we need not go mourning the buffaloes. In the nature of things they had to give place to better cattle, though the change might have been made without barbarous wickedness” (“The American Forests,” by John Muir).

Heat-Moon is in a sense two people, and he writes about our continent, its leaves of grass, its geology, and its denizens with both the canny worldliness of his Irish and English background and the mystical time sense of his Osage ancestors. It is not surprising that he continues the great circle that has absorbed this magazine since its inception. —THE EDITORS



David Rees

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The September Almanac was compiled with the assistance of Gail Cleere, on behalf of the U.S. Naval Observatory; Jacqueline Bogard, of Del Monte Foods; James R. Tischer, of Woodland Biomass Power; and Nielsen Media Research.

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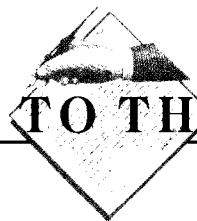
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



THERAPY FOR CHILDREN

An otherwise helpful article, "Therapy for Children," by Katharine Davis Fishman (June *Atlantic*), was seriously flawed by its acceptance of the myth that for "normal" children, mourning lasts one year. Grief educators, therapists, and counselors are coming to realize that grief is one of the major turning points in the life of children at any age. Children who are grieving over the death of a parent or sibling may normally express their grief for an indeterminate period of time, especially if the grief is related to a violent and unexpected death.

Fishman does not clarify how difficult it is for a child to express pain and suffering to adults who are reluctant to acknowledge, for lots of reasons, the child's difficulties. Children do not have the vocabulary to express their pain and are often quieted by parents, teachers, and counselors who don't expect that serious experiences of death, violence, suicide, and murder will be expressed by children over long periods of time. At Fernside Center for Grieving Children, in Cincinnati, we see many children from three to eighteen who, having found support for their grief experiences, move on in their development. This rarely takes place in a year.

It is time for the psychological and social-work communities to add the area of children's grief to their lists of priorities.

STEVE SUNDERLAND
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dr. Charles Sarnoff certainly captured the poetry of childhood. Now when I kiss my children good-night I see them as biologically celibate soldier-dwarfs one day closer to ludic demise. Silly me: I used to believe that they were miraculous beings recently arrived from beyond the beyond, come to redeem the world and

kindle joy in our hearts. On second thought, my original perception makes a lot more sense than the bizarre notions put forth as science by the child analysts. What sensible parent would sentence a child to a lengthy exposure to this type of "therapy"?

DONALD HOPE
Richmond, Vt.

Katharine Davis Fishman did a fine job of presenting readers with a working knowledge of child therapy. My only criticism is that the author regards parents as consumers, in the same manner that they are consumers of camps and schools. Parents certainly have an obligation to investigate a therapist's training and credentials, and a right to feel comfortable with the therapist's personality and style. However, parents almost always have very strong feelings about bringing their children for treatment. These feelings may enhance or detract from their child's treatment. The author refers to parents as "suffering, intimidated, and guilt-ridden." Parents may also be angry at their child, their spouse, the child's school, even perhaps at the therapist they have yet to meet. Though the author mentions Kazdin's finding that 94 percent of child therapists work with parents, the author's discussion of this work is sparse.

I would advise parents that before they walk into a therapist's office for the first time, child in hand, they discuss their own thoughts and feelings with a spouse, a friend, or—best yet—the child's new therapist. Most child therapists would be pleased to know that they and the parents are in the same corner.

GILA HARTSTEIN
Jewish Board of Family and
Children's Services
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Katharine Davis Fishman seems to treat the classificatory system of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Men-*

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tal Disorders, Third Edition, Revised, as if it provided an accurate description of specific disorders. Children and adults do not read the *DSM-III-R* before they develop symptoms and do not know how to behave in order to fit the named condition. While classification is useful, at the least it needs to be accompanied by a dynamic description.

And while I appreciate Fishman's intent not to become mired in theoretical differences, parents seeking treatment for their child need to recognize that psychodynamic approaches are not all alike. In traditional Freudian psychodynamic approaches the therapist relies heavily on drive theory, which tends to understate the interpersonal influences on personality and development, including cultural factors as well as familial ones.

The interpersonal psychodynamic approach, derived from the teachings of Harry Stack Sullivan, views development differently, and assumes that personality, style, and pathology are the result of many influences. In addition, the presence and identity of the therapist or analyst is a vital part of the treatment. Sullivan did not work directly with children, although his approach is quite applicable to the treatment of them. And although he used language as the central form of communication, he was aware of all the nonverbal means of communication. Additionally, he saw the therapist as a participant-observer, very much aware of the input of the therapist and fully using the relationship between a patient and an analyst.

STANLEY SPIEGEL
Supervising Analyst
William Alanson White Institute
New York, N.Y.

I was amazed at Richard Chasin's handling of the four-year-old boy's encopresis as if it were merely a behavior problem. Thousands of silent sufferers should be told that this physical symptom, source of family conflict and heartbreak for the school-age child, is not self-limiting, is not "outgrown," and is not responsive to scolding, punishment, or rewards.

It can be cured at the encopresis clinic of any large pediatric center, such as the Children's Hospital in Seattle.

BARBARA M. GOLD
Edmonds, Wash.

One idea in "Therapy for Children" that deserves further consideration is the possibility that a diagnosed condition may be more a reflection of society's intolerance than a measure of a true problem. Unfortunately, actionist professionals are ready, and seem to be more than willing, to do their thing.

A return of strong traditional family values wouldn't hurt. Furthermore, a controlled clinical trial may reveal that the wisdom and services of Grandma may be just as effective as a gang of professionals.

JOHN F. HART
Blair, Nebr.

When the cover story of a magazine deals with a subject as specialized as your cover story did this time, I can't help feeling shortchanged.

ERWIN FUCHS
Seattle, Wash.

The *Atlantic* remains on our active subscription list because of in-depth articles like "Therapy for Children," by Katharine Davis Fishman.

BONNIE B. FALLON
Marblehead, Mass.

Considering the theoretical and technical complexities of clinical therapy and the state of war between differently oriented practitioners, I found "Therapy for Children" informative and evenhanded. However, I am appalled by the choice of spokespersons. Despite the article's own statistics that there are more female than male psychologists and social workers and roughly an equal number of psychiatrists (57 percent male, 43 percent female), three men are profiled. Furthermore, other men in the piece are quoted as clinic directors or authors (Kissinger, Catlin, Kazdin, Parloff, Silverman) while women are primarily relegated to the role of talking only as therapists about cases (Roth, Laura Chasin). And look at those numbers: of the professionals interviewed, eight are men and three are women (including Combrinck-Graham)!

Women may not have the "requisite beard," as Katharine Davis Fishman so glibly puts it, and I have no doubt that years of sexism have kept the profession's higher echelons male-dominated. But Fishman has done your readers, the profession, and women a

disservice by distorting the field's demographics and falling into a boy's network in her interview choices.

CATHERINE MONK
Brooklyn, N.Y.

I have one bone to pick with Katherine Davis Fishman. She identifies the "types of practitioners available [as] psychiatrists, psychologists, or social workers." Nowhere does she mention master's-level trained therapists other than M.S.W.s. Her cautionary statement that "many 'therapists' hang out shingles without adequate credentials of any kind, and consumers should be wary" (after defining "adequate credentials" as M.D.s, Ph.D.s, or M.S.W.s) can be interpreted as warning people away from competent *trained* therapists who simply have different (read "smaller") "tribal affiliation[s]." I have a master's degree in "existential, phenomenological, therapeutic psychology" from Seattle University. This accredited two-year program, which includes a nine-month clinical internship, is at least as rigorous as any M.S.W. program. Granted, clinical social workers are the dominant master's-level practitioners of psychotherapy in the United States today; for example, an M.S.W. is the only master's degree accepted by many insurance companies. But this speaks more to powerful lobbying than to superior ability as a therapist.

EMILY M. DAVIES
Chugiak, Alaska

"Therapy for Children" was informative and certainly helpful for those parents who need reassurance and need to choose the most appropriate therapy. However, Katharine Davis Fishman overlooked an entire group of therapists who are prepared to engage in therapy with children: marriage, family, child counselors. MFCC therapists have a master's degree in counseling or in a related field, have interned for 3,000 hours under supervision, and have passed a rigorous oral and written licensing exam.

PATIENCE SHUTTS
Huntington Beach, Calif.

Katharine Davis Fishman replies:

In my article Philip Kendall suggested that a grieving child might get along without professional help during the first year of mourning, but if grieving

disrupts the child's life after that, some therapy might be helpful. While Steve Sunderland would, apparently, go further and start therapy immediately for all grieving children, I assume it's the implied distinction between "normal" and "abnormal" or "maladaptive" that gives him trouble.

Donald Hope is fortunate indeed that *his* children are well and happy, and can be described as he perceives them. It is only when the miraculous beings have, for example, hysterical night terrors that won't go away that Sarnoff's idiom might be called into play, in order to make the beings feel better and ready to kindle joy once more. Sarnoff, incidentally, puts forth his treatment as a "mixture of art and science," but if parents don't like the vocabulary, they should seek another type of therapy for their children.

If Gila Hartstein would reread my article, she would find explanations by Drs. Sarnoff, Falcone, Kendall, and Chasin of how they work with parents. The particular sessions I reported dealt with children alone because adults know less about what they experience in therapy. The field of child therapy includes, besides the skilled practitioners I described, some charlatans and high-pressure salesmen, as well as good clinicians whom parents might just find uncongenial. Since therapists see outpatients at most a couple of hours a week for a few years, whereas parents live with their children, and since parents are where the buck stops, I suggest once more, in disagreement with Dr. Hartstein, that they should behave like skeptical, well-informed consumers, and keep their wits about

them. That, I believe, is what social workers call "empowerment," and it's why I wrote the article.

The first issue that Stanley Spiegel raises seems to be a hot button with professionals, even though they themselves have put *DSM-III-R* together because, as he says, classification is useful. I stated specifically that the book is only "a point of departure for diagnostic consultation." Many parents haven't the foggiest notion whether their children's problems merit treatment, and while it would be nice

Interview, but must have stored that information in another part of my brain. Although I do think I made it reasonably clear that not all psychodynamic therapists are Freudians, I wish I had included a phrase explaining that Sullivans are more participatory.

To Barbara Gold, Richard Chasin says he doesn't believe that all enco-
 pre-
 sis has one source or is simple to help. But it seemed harmless to try a dramatic family situation, and he himself was surprised at how responsive *this* child was to this intervention.

John Hart ought to know that good therapists are (to varying degrees) mindful of the social context of their patients' problems. I didn't meet a therapist (or a parent) who wouldn't claim to believe in "strong traditional family values," but what specifically those values might be varies with the individual and the tradition he or she was brought up in. If Grandma can relieve a child's suffering and clear up the symptoms, she should by all means have at it. The kids I saw, alas, were beyond Grandma's reach.

Catherine Monk's praise does much to mitigate the harshness of her objection to

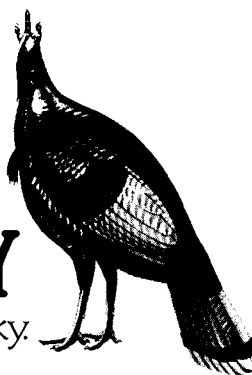
the presence of so many males in my article. My purpose was not to talk with practitioners who had been sorted out by sex but to work with professionals who were both distinguished in the field and willing to make time for me. My book on the subject will cast a wider net and, perhaps, quiet the gender police.

As for Emily Davies and Patience Shutts, I have some sympathy for their complaint, and I have no doubt that each is competent to work expertly with children.

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to say "If you're miserable and the child seems to be too, check out therapy," parents (especially those who might disagree with each other) often feel the need for something more concrete. So they get out *DSM-III-R*, they look up childhood disorders, and if a collection of symptoms described therein sounds familiar, they're more comfortable consulting a professional.

As for the second issue, I can only say, "Oops!" Sullivan's work did come up in conversations I had with several therapists, and I've read *The Psychiatric*



CAN POETRY MATTER?

As a poet tenured in academia, I think most of what Dana Gioia ("Can Poetry Matter?," May *Atlantic*) says about the isolated state of poetry today is sadly true. I disagree, however, with his reasoning about why this condition exists.

Americans are now and always have been indifferent to poetry. De Crevecoeur pointed out in 1782 the debilitating effects of a pluralistic, materialistic society on the literature it would produce and support. Immigrants are by necessity opportunistic and materialistic; obviously, when they come from every culture in the world, they have no common literary tradition and no understanding of the importance of one in gluing together a society's higher values.

Success in the United States has always depended on income and, to a lesser extent, on education. Our educational system serves vocational needs, not the higher values of a meritorious democracy which were envisioned by Jefferson, Adams, and Franklin. Donald Trump, for all his venality, was the role model adopted by most of my students until General Norman Schwarzkopf came along to tap their love of more obvious violence—a violence inherent in our obsolete frontier attitude. Poetry is for sissies. Frost recited a poem at Kennedy's inauguration like a clergyman giving the country its dose of religion.

The modernist poets to whom Gioia refers—Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot, and Gertrude Stein—had to go to Europe to find an audience before America would deign to wake up from its stupor of greed and hypocritical piety to recognize their native genius. William Carlos Williams did indeed stick it out here, but he got very little readership outside the coterie of émigré poets in England and Europe. Why bother with poets?, Americans ask. They don't make any money.

Real poetry breathes and has a heartbeat, but Americans never get close enough to hear it. Unless and until we forge a unified culture that is divorced from pluralistic greed and self-serving violence, poetry will remain isolated—it will be read only by saints and sissies.

BARBARA ADAMS
Newburgh, N.Y.

Dana Gioia replies:

I cannot argue with Barbara Adams's sad assertions that America defines success financially and that our educational system is too narrowly pragmatic. But if De Crevecoeur observed the ill effects of our materialism, a later French visitor, Alexis de Tocqueville, noted with surprise how many nineteenth-century American homes contained well-thumbed copies of Shakespeare and the Bible. Whatever its materialistic obsessions, our nation also has immense spiritual potential. Surely the ambition of artists and intellectuals must be to nourish this energy. It is encouraging to remember that while American culture has always had a down side, masterpieces do get written and win—however slowly—their readership. The challenge for artists and intellectuals is to be realistic without being discouraged—or, to twist Ms. Adams's own metaphor, to be saints without being sissies.

HIGHLY SPECULATIVE

Eamonn Fingleton ("Finance: Highly Speculative," June *Atlantic*) points out a serious problem in contemporary American finance, but his solution would intensify the problem. Here are four causes of the present speculation and volatility in the equities market.

First, the sharply progressive graduated tax on income. This has two relevant effects on finance: the first is to throw most long-term (pension-related) investment on behalf of individuals into the hands of fiduciaries, and the second coincides with the problem of the treatment of capital gain, whereby an investor does better to realize a series of small gains than to realize a single large one.

Second, the tax code treats all long-term gain as equally subject to tax. For individuals this provides no incentive, and for fiduciaries strong disincentive, to keep large unrealized gain in an investment portfolio.

Third, the tax on estates, as designed, rewards owners of enterprises who break up and distribute their holdings during their lifetimes. Many enterprises expire at the demise of the owner because of tax complications.

Fourth, the double taxation of dividends serves first to squeeze private investors out of the equity market, by

allowing fiduciaries to accumulate dividends at a greatly increased rate, and second to reward enterprises for financing through debt rather than equity, because interest on debt counts as an expense but dividends on equity do not. Large-scale debt financing not only reduces the exponential gain from equity investment but also dilutes the ownership function of equity and promotes the outrageous theft of equity represented by current patterns of executive compensation.

Far from being irrational speculators, our modern investors are playing precisely the role that the U.S. tax code directs them into. Adding another tax on equity will not solve the problems Fingleton describes.

BRUCE P. SHIELDS
Wolcott, Vt.

Eamonn Fingleton replies:

Bruce Shields is right that fiduciaries get nice tax breaks, but I doubt if removing the breaks will remove the fiduciaries. In any case, no one understands better than the fiduciaries that a small trading levy would have a big impact on reducing trading volume.

Since it marks the end of the week-end and heralds the start of yet another work week, I would suggest that any Monday qualifies as "black" for a sizable portion of the labor force. October of 1989 included five such "black Mondays": the second, the ninth, the sixteenth, the twenty-third, and the thirtieth. None of those black Mondays, however, should be confused (as Eamonn Fingleton has confused one) with Black Monday, October 19, 1987. That Monday was "the most devastating day in the history of financial markets at least since the bursting of the South Seas Bubble in the 1720s or the collapse of the imaginative speculative structures of John Law in Paris in the same years," according to John Kenneth Galbraith, in his *The Great Crash, 1929*. A doubly black Monday for many investors.

FRANK GROSSMAN
Ottawa, Ont.

The mistake noticed by Frank Grossman (and others) was the result of an in-house editorial glitch, not a misreading of history on Eamonn Fingleton's part.

—THE EDITORS



ILLIBERAL EDUCATION

Dinesh D'Souza's article "Illiberal Education" (March *Atlantic*) raises important questions about contemporary scholarship and its relationship to critical issues facing a changing American society. But in two instances in his article about which I have intimate knowledge, D'Souza is in error. On Duke's recruitment of a number of scholars in the humanities, he writes; "Oddly the university's administration seems to have had little idea of the nature of its acquisitions even as its humanities departments were transformed." Not true.

In the early 1980s, with the retirement of a large number of faculty members in the department, several respected people from the English and other humanities departments proposed that with thoughtful investment we could re-establish Duke as a leading center of scholarship in the humanities. Duke set out to do that with full knowledge that many of the professors we sought were at the cutting edge of literary scholarship, which by definition meant that they would be controversial. We also assumed that these people would help to attract outstanding students to Duke in a field where student interest nationally had been moribund. Judging from the extraordinary demand for admission to our humanities departments and the exceptional quality of these students, we succeeded in achieving our objective.

D'Souza also asserts that the Duke administration colluded with the so-called radical fringe to deny free speech. Here D'Souza borders on intentional deceit. He writes that a facul-

ty member opposed to the establishment at Duke of a chapter of the National Association of Scholars wrote to "the university provost demanding that [NAS] members be barred from serving on academic committees that have any say on matters affecting the curriculum. The Duke faculty rejected the demand. On this point, at least, the old standard of academic freedom seems for the time being to have prevailed." D'Souza fails to note that I immediately rejected the suggestion and reaffirmed the administration's com-

place" it with something new. The Western-culture requirement was modified in 1988 by faculty vote, and is thriving in its updated form, under its new name, Cultures, Ideas, and Values (CIV).

As before, freshmen must complete a year-long sequence of courses (known as tracks) from among eight choices—seven of which continue from the former Western-culture program. One track, "Europe and the Americas," began on an experimental basis and has now been fully integrated into the program.

"Europe and the Americas" studies European traditions alongside, and in interaction with, other important components of culture in the Americas. Major European texts are read alongside texts from North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean from the fourteenth century to the present. It was this one track that was the subject of so much attention and misunderstanding.

As a result of the change from Western culture to CIV, faculty members can now more easily incorporate additional classic works that had been

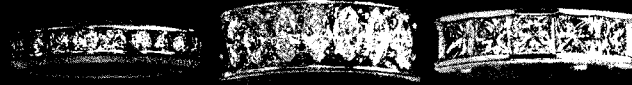
excluded from the previous reading list. In fact, a comparison of readings across tracks shows that both Plato and Machiavelli are read in six of the eight tracks, and Shakespeare and Aristotle in all eight. Obviously, many of the books from the previous Western-culture requirement are still used.

The mandate of the revised CIV curriculum remains to provide a common intellectual experience for all Stanford freshmen. It is through a regular process of curricular revision that the undergraduate curriculum re-

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mitment to academic freedom, a position that was endorsed later by the Academic Council. What explanation can there be for this omission of my response unless D'Souza wanted to tell a story that supported his thesis?

PHILLIP A. GRIFFITHS
Provost
Duke University
Durham, N.C.

Contrary to Dinesh D'Souza's allegations, Stanford did not "abolish" its Western-culture requirement or "re-

sponds to changes in knowledge and changes in the world.

THOMAS WASOW
Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Stanford University
Stanford, Calif.

Dinesh D'Souza replies:

Phillip Griffiths raises two such minor cavils that I read his letter as confirmation that my major criticisms of Duke University are essentially correct. I clearly stated that his university's intention was to place itself at the "cutting edge." My point was that this pursuit of literary fashion was exacting a high cost in terms of the diminution of intellectual standards, both in the hiring of faculty members and in course content. In numerous conversations with Duke administrators I detected lots of enthusiasm for controversy and publicity but little or no understanding of ideas such as reader-response theory and deconstruction.

Second, I did not mean to slight Provost Griffiths; indeed, I am pleased to see him rejecting the demands of the "cutting edge" when they reach absurd extremes. But it's far from clear why this omission could be considered nefariously calculated to support my thesis. My goal was to compliment Duke's governing bodies in this case for rejecting Stanley Fish's demand that members of the National Association of Scholars not be permitted to serve on tenure committees.

As for Stanford, the university used to have a Western Civilization requirement that included fifteen classic works. It replaced this popular sequence with Cultures, Ideas, and Values (CIV). The abbreviation makes the new course sound like the old course, and is designed to convey the impression that little has changed. But this is not the message that Stanford communicated to student and faculty activists who charged the old curriculum with having a Eurocentric white male heterosexual bias. And although the new sequence includes some Western classics (Marx is a particular favorite—"the one overrepresented white male here," one Stanford professor tells me), the CIV legislation explicitly requires professors in all eight tracks to give "substantial representation" to works by women, minorities, and natives of the Third World. The "Europe and the Americas" track is simply the

most blatantly ideological among them.

I am in favor of an inclusive approach that exposes liberally educated students to the best that has been thought and said in both Western and non-Western cultures, but unfortunately Stanford's CIV curriculum, including the controversial "Europe and the Americas" track routinely results in the assignment of works, such as Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, that are less representative of Third World thinking than of the political stances of Stanford professors. This is bogus multiculturalism.

PX LIQUOR

Either Kathleen Cushman or the author of the book she reviews, *Military Brats* ("Government Issue," June *Atlantic*), has been separated from the pleasure of shopping in post exchanges and commissaries for too long. Whatever the causes of alcoholism in the military may be, "heavily discounted tax-free booze sold at base liquor stores" is not among them. Prices at package stores on bases with which I am familiar are comparable to those at liquor stores in the areas surrounding them; in fact, it is often possible to get better bargains—for instance, in case lots—on the "outside."

V. T. BOATWRIGHT
Stonington, Conn.

Kathleen Cushman replies:

Major Doug Hart, of the Pentagon's Public Affairs Office, points out that Class VI liquor stores on military installations are exempt from state taxes on liquor; abroad no federal tax is charged either. Thus, in states where alcohol is not taxed, prices may indeed be comparable to those in civilian stores nearby.

PUT CONCRETELY

John Sedgwick's exposition on concrete ("Strong But Sensitive," April *Atlantic*) was as sturdy as his subject, just the right aggregate of fact and fancy. But much as we may admire the achievements of the Romans, it was the Grecian team of Ictinus and Callicrates who supervised the construction of the Parthenon, which was complet-

ed, and, one presumes, dedicated by local politicians, in 432 B.C.

KENT SHAW
Vergennes, Vt.

Mr. Shaw is not the only one of our correspondents to have misread John Sedgwick's text, which refers to the Pantheon, originally built by Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa in 27–25 B.C. and reconstructed in its present form by Emperor Hadrian around A.D. 125.

—THE EDITORS

ADVICE & CONSENT

To set the record straight, I did not write that 80 percent of the Bolsheviks' Cheka agents were Jews, as Father Andrew L. J. James maintained in Letters to the Editor (January *Atlantic*). Nor did I write that Jews who served in the Cheka tortured prisoners out of "grief."

Citing George Leggett's definitive study on the Cheka, I wrote in *Red Victory: A History of the Russian Civil War* (p. 314) that "Jews made up nearly eighty percent of the rank-and-file Cheka agents in the Ukraine." The Ukraine is only a small part of the Soviet Union, and despite turbulence there, the portion of the total Cheka forces assigned to it in 1918–1921 reflected that fact.

I also pointed out on the same page that the Cheka represented an early example of the Bolsheviks' readiness to use national, religious, and ethnic antagonisms to set various nationalities against one another in the lands under their control. I hardly need add that the successors of the Soviet Union's founders are reaping that bitter harvest today in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Ukraine, and Uzbekistan, not to mention such more-recent Soviet acquisitions as Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

W. BRUCE LINCOLN
Distinguished Research Professor
Department of History
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Ill.

Dr. Jeff Miller's April Letter to the Editor was one of the most beautifully concise pieces of writing to appear in *The Atlantic* in a long time.

A. T. KLINE
Miami, Fla.

FOCUSING ON EDUCATION

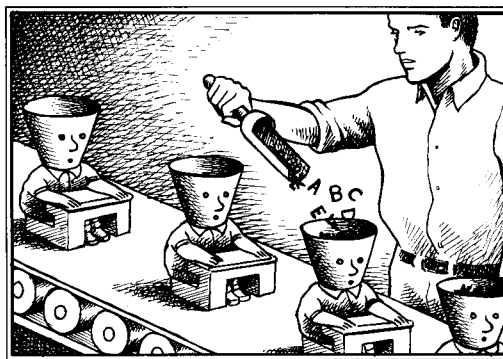
THIS IS THE THIRD IN A SERIES OF PUBLIC-SERVICE ADVERTISEMENTS SPONSORED BY ROCKWELL INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION ABOUT THE NATION'S EDUCATION CRISIS. THEY ARE PUBLISHED TO ENCOURAGE INFORMED DISCUSSION AND DEBATE.

EDUCATION "RESTRUCTURING" has captured the imagination of policymakers, business leaders, governors, state legislators, education-association leaders, and citizens at large. Almost everyone in the education business is absorbed with it. Almost everyone, that is, except teachers. Yet without their support and involvement, education restructuring will never be more than a dream.

As we all know, schools can be no better than their teachers. Indeed, given the state of American education, it is a wonder there are so many dedicated and caring teachers, men and women who tolerate bureaucracy, unsatisfactory working conditions, low status, and low wages.

The hard truth is that in many respects teaching looks more like blue-collar than white-collar work. Only in private schools and a handful of the best public schools are teachers treated as professionals, with the opportunities and obligations professionals enjoy. Most teachers must work to the clock, use textbooks adopted by a remote bureaucracy, submit lesson plans for administrative approval, and employ tests and measures imposed by a third party. Other professionals—lawyers, doctors, architects, accountants, clergy—work for themselves. Hospitals and law firms, accounting partnerships and architectural firms employ administrators to do the partners' or senior staff's bidding, not the other way around. Few teachers have access to the simple things other professionals take for granted: a telephone, for example, or a decent faculty lounge where they can have a cup of coffee and share notes with colleagues. Teachers are limited in their choice of opportunities for professional growth and renewal, something most professionals expect routinely. Most important, teachers are not in charge of their professional lives. Unions bargain, but bread-and-butter issues are not the same as professional issues.

What explains this unproductive state of affairs, and what might we do about it? Much of the blame is traceable to a badly out-of-date business metaphor. And the solution lies in a modern, high-tech metaphor.



Empowering Teachers

BY DENIS P. DOYLE

In the not too distant past, the scientific-management movement, led by people like Frederick Taylor, descended on schools and businesses alike, stopwatches and clipboards in hand. Using a "scientific" approach to management, schools were "teacher-proofed": designed in the hope that they would run whether or not the teachers were any good, echoing similar practices on the nation's assembly lines. The assembly line, it must be remembered, was a triumph of the "dumbing down" of work, making it routine enough for unskilled workers to do. And while no one talks any longer about teacher-proofing the

classroom, most teachers in America are familiar with its legacy.

What about the high-tech assembly line? In the most modern manufacturing firms, of course, the routinized work has been so "dumbed down" that robots perform it (and do a better job, because they never get bored or distracted) while the human beings on the line do what they're good at: troubleshooting and problem-solving.

What is the lesson for schools? At least as a trial, we should begin an experiment: teacher-run schools. Teachers can form cooperatives or partnerships or collaboratives or, as Dale Mann of Teachers College recently suggested, teacher ESOPs—Employee Stock Ownership Plans. It works in the business world, why not in schools? This is not an idle question. If teachers are to become true professionals, they must seize the moment and demonstrate to their own satisfaction—as well as their clients'—that they really can do it right.

How to begin such a radical experiment? One step at a time. A great virtue of American federalism is that each state solves its problems its own way; so too can the nation's 15,000 school districts. Bold and visionary schools can experiment and when the evidence is in, the others can follow suit.

Denis P. Doyle is an education analyst and a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute. With David T. Kearns, the deputy secretary of education, he is a co-author of Winning the Brain Race: A Bold Plan to Make Our Schools Competitive (ICS Press).

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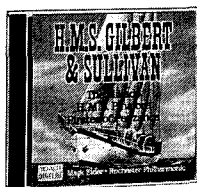


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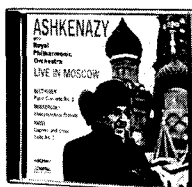
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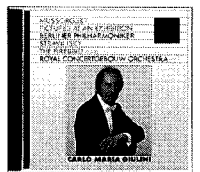
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Roger Norrington—Schumann: Symphonies Nos. 3 (Rhenish) & 4. London Classical Players (Angel) 414-094

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Beethoven: Symphonies Nos. 4 and 5. Norrington, London Classical Players (Angel) 400-184

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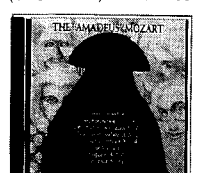
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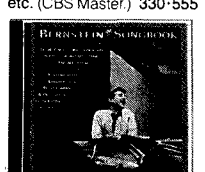
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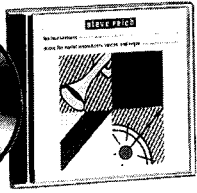
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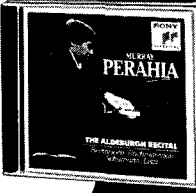
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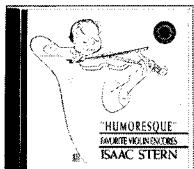


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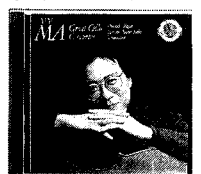
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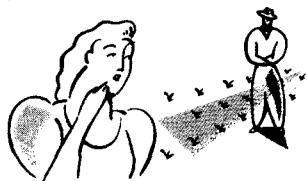
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GOVERNMENT

September 1, as of today all new convertibles, small trucks, and vans must be equipped with lap-and-shoulder safety belts in rear forward-facing seats. 3, opening day for the first public school in the nation to be run by a private company. According to a plan agreed to by public-school officials, the newly built South Pointe Elementary School, in Miami Beach, Florida, will be run for a five-year trial period by Education Alternatives, a Minneapolis-based company that already runs two private schools in other parts of the country. The school, which offers a low student-teacher ratio and demands substantial parental involvement, is located in a community that is largely poor and Hispanic.



ARTS & LETTERS

September 25, Scarlett O'Hara's 55-year-long wait for another shot at Rhett Butler comes to an end today, when Alexandra Ripley's *Scarlett: The Sequel to Margaret Mitchell's Gone With the Wind*, for which Warner Books paid \$4.94 million, appears in bookstores in 40 countries. Warner is revealing nothing about the book's contents. No bound galleys have been sent out in advance for review. One big question is how the ending of Ripley's book compares with that of Mitchell's ("Tomorrow, I'll think of some way to get him back. After all, tomorrow is another day"). The final sentences of earlier novels by Ripley include "She put her sore feet gingerly on the stairs for the climb to her cold, empty bed" (*Charleston*) and "My most utterly beloved Mary, you taste like my favorite, red beans and rice" (*New Orleans Legacy*).



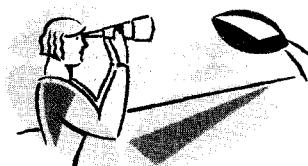
Q & A

Is any one hiccup cure better than the others?

Although doctors believe they have located a "hiccup center," in the upper spine, they cannot recommend a "best" treatment. A surprising number of folkloric hiccup remedies do appear to have medical validity. Some cures—among them, eating granulated sugar, hard bread, or crushed ice, and drinking from the far side of a glass—work, doctors think, because they irritate the soft palate or the pharynx, and so may inhibit impulses transmitted by the vagus nerve to the hiccup center. Others—including breath-holding and breathing in and out of a paper bag—appear to be effective because they disrupt respiratory rhythm and, it is thought, inhibit the diaphragm's ability to contract. In cases of persistent and so-called intractable hiccups, more-dramatic measures may be called into play: drug therapy, acupuncture, hypnosis, and negative-reinforcement techniques.

DEMOGRAPHICS

September 1, the first nationally televised game of the National Football League's 1991 regular football season (the Minnesota Vikings versus the Chicago Bears) is to be broadcast today. NFL games are watched by twice as many people as watch any other sport. Perhaps surprisingly, during the past decade the audience for televised football has become increasingly female. According to the Simmons Study



of Media and Markets, women now account for 41 percent of those who watch NFL football games. Most women aren't just fair-weather fans; 37 percent of the loyal audience (those who watch games "frequently or almost always") are women, up from 33 percent in 1980. Nearly half of all American women have bought items that bear an NFL logo. In recognition of the growing prominence of female football fans, a line of women's fashion apparel, NFL Spirit, has been licensed by the NFL.



THE SKIES

September 9, New Moon. 10, a rare conjunction of the elusive planet Mercury and the bright planet Jupiter occurs, at 6:00 A.M. EDT, 45 minutes before sunrise. 23, Full Moon, also known this month as the Harvest Moon. Today is also the occasion of the Autumnal Equinox; the sun rises precisely in the east and sets precisely in the west, and will be seen directly overhead at noon by those who live along the Equator. 28, Venus, in the southeast, reaches its greatest brightness—17 times brighter than Sirius, the brightest star—early this morning.

ENVIRONMENT

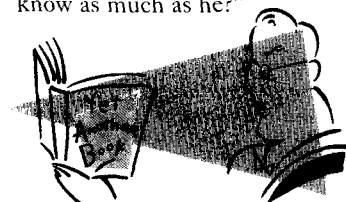
This month is the end of the harvest season for peaches used for canning and, consequently, the time when peach pits and peach-orchard prunings become a valuable commodity in their own right. These, along with other agricultural wastes, are now in high demand as fuel for biomass power plants. Such plants are becoming increasingly common (there are more than 100 in California), to the point that operators in some states must scramble to buy up



sufficient quantities of dry agricultural waste to supplement the wood waste that they also use. The price of peach pits, after transportation costs are deducted, has doubled during the past three years. Overall, agricultural wastes generate enough electricity to power almost half a million homes a year, a significantly greater quantity than that generated by solar-power plants.

100 YEARS AGO

Woodrow Wilson, writing in the September, 1891, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "The modern critic is a leader of fashion. He carries with him the air of a literary worldliness. If your book be a novel, your reviewer will know all previous plots, all former, all possible motives and situations. You cannot write anything absolutely new for him, and why should you desire to do again what has been done already? If it be a poem, the reviewer's head already rings with the whole gamut of the world's metrical music; he can recognize any simile, recall all turns of phrase, match every sentiment; why seek to please him anew with old things? If it concern itself with the philosophy of politics, he can and will set himself to test it by the whole history of its kind from Plato down to Henry George. How can it but spoil your sincerity to know that your critic will know everything? Will you not be tempted of the devil to anticipate his judgment or his pretensions by pretending to know as much as he?"



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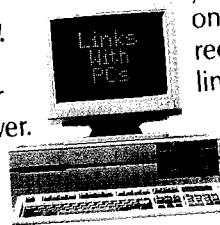
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REPORTS & COMMENT

NOTES

Coming to Grief

The calibration of misery

I OPENED THE mail a few days ago to find a letter from a friend, and with it an article from the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, which he commended to my attention. The article, titled "Panetics," was written by R.G.H. Siu, who is a chemist, a former director of the Justice Department's National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, and the author of several books, including *Microbial Decomposition of Cellulose*. No sooner had I glanced at the article's abstract than a legal term I had recently heard—"hedonic loss"—came forcefully to mind, along with the realization that hedonic loss might soon have some competition.

I'll come back to panetics in a moment. First: are you familiar with hedonic loss? It is a concept that has by now spread from the federal court system to the state courts, and from lawsuits involving wrongful death to those involving personal injury. Briefly, in wrongful-death and personal-injury cases the plaintiff used to be able to seek damages from a defendant for loss of earnings, for the cost of medical care, and for pain and

suffering, this last category being widely held to encompass such intangibles as "loss of companionship" and "loss of enjoyment." Over the years, however, intangibles have loomed ever larger in the eyes of lawyers and juries, and in a 1984 case that was heard in Illinois, *Sherrod v. Berry*, a federal court agreed for the first time that a life's forgone pleasures—the pleasure of residing among one's family, of singing in a choir, of gardening or playing tennis, of a first kiss or a summer day—constituted a whole new category for which damages could be awarded, over and above any award for pain and suffering. In coming to this conclusion the court accepted the argument of Stan V. Smith, an economist

from Chicago who testified in the case, that hedonic loss (his term, from the Greek *hedone*, meaning "pleasure") was a legitimate consideration. It also accepted as valid the complex economic models that Smith employed to estimate the monetary value of the hedonic loss involved in *Sherrod*. Smith's economic models needn't be explained here; suffice it to say that they derive from a calculation of the value of a human life, which in turn is based on a cold-blooded, Chicago-school analysis of what Americans, as individuals and through governments, pay to preserve and protect human life. For the purposes of computing hedonic loss, Stan Smith estimated the value of the life of a typical thirty-year-

old at between \$500,000 and \$3.5 million. (His estimates are always presented to juries as a range—what he calls a "zone of fairness.") With sums like these at stake, it is not surprising to find lawyers for the plaintiffs in hedonic-loss cases speaking eloquently to juries of life's unfolding pleasures, its vast, ineffable bounty: a Pacific sunset beneath an amber sky . . . a soft breeze caressing a stand of pines . . . the trill of a mountain stream cascading over polished stones . . . the warm unknowingness of a newborn's smile.

I don't have any legal training, and I don't know whether, in terms of justice or efficiency, the concept of hedonic loss makes sense. It has certainly provoked much comment and much opposition. What seems most remarkable about the concept to me, though, is its implicit assumption that the

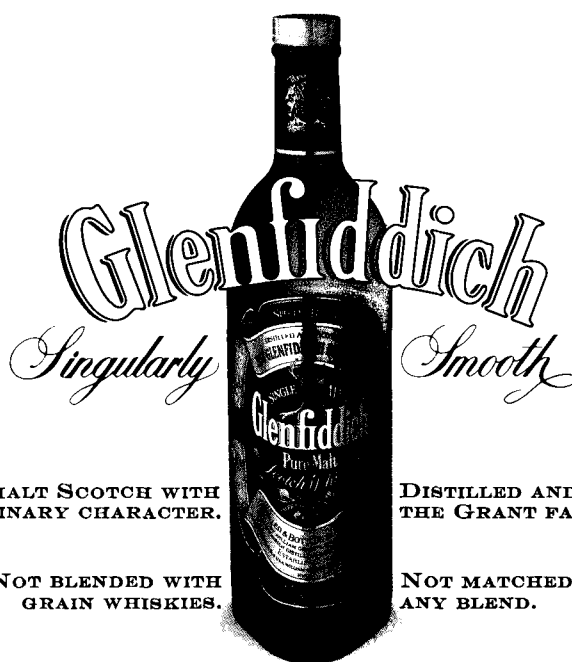


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future is to be a friendly time—a period of net pleasure—rather than an indifferent time, a somewhat unfriendly time, or a disaster. It is odd to see lawyers, of all people, making this assumption, given the raw material from which they fashion a livelihood. I remember wondering, when I first read about hedonic loss, if some legal strategist would soon devise a counter to it, based on the notion that into every life a little rain must fall—might devise, that is, a parallel but antithetical argument, one that might go by the name of “pathetic loss” (my term, from the Greek *pathos*, meaning “pain”). The aim here would be for a defense attorney to offset an allegation of hedonic loss by showing that a plaintiff, though incontestably the victim of some tragic endeavor or procedure, had as a result of it been spared other kinds of likely and terrible unpleasantness. We have a brush with this very concept every time we say that it's a blessing so-and-so isn't alive to witness such-and-such. There's a hitch, though: Would it ever really be possible to assemble data on the average American's level of suffering over a lifetime—data that could match, in some sense, those laid before juries by proponents of hedonic loss?

ENTER R.G.H. SIU, whose article is subtitled “The Study of the Infliction of Suffering.” Siu's article is a stirring manifesto that, after noting “the unceasing mutual inflictions of suffering by practically everyone,” calls for the creation of a new academic discipline, panetics, devoted exclusively to suffering—its causes, nature, and quantification. The name he proposes for this discipline comes from the word in Pali (an Asian language spoken by the Buddha) for the verb “to inflict.”

A central feature of Siu's program is the establishment of something called the dukkha (from the Pali word for “suffering”) as the basic unit for measuring the level of disagreeability of all things. To get the idea, Siu writes, first apportion all degrees of suffering into a nine-tier intensity scale, ranging from level 1 (“barely noticeable”) through level 5 (“interfering with daily life”) and on to level 9 (“unbearable, wanting to die”). A dukkha is the amount of suffering experienced in one full day by one person whose suffering is at in-

tensity level 1. Level of intensity multiplied by duration multiplied by the number of individuals involved yields aggregate amounts of suffering. A million dukkhas is called a megadukkha. A billion dukkhas is a gigadukkha. Siu makes no extravagant claims for this conceptual child of his, nor does he sell it short. “The paneticist,” he writes, “has good reasons to be dissatisfied with the dukkha as he eyes the rigidly fixed and precisely calibrated calorie of the physicist. But he should gain much comfort as he beholds the wildly varying monetary units of the economist grappling with triple-digit inflation.”

Stan Smith, in arriving at his estimates of the value of a human life, used data on spending from a variety of government and private sources. Siu likewise has used data from government and private sources—for example, on unemployment, crime, sickness, poverty, and pollution—to come up with a figure for the total amount of suffering in America in 1979: about fifty gigadukkhas, or seven percent of the theoretical maximum that could have been inflicted in that year. That is enough to provide every man, woman, and child in the country with suffering at intensity level 5 during the waking hours of about sixty days a year—about right, in my experience.

The relevance to American jurisprudence of Siu's research efforts will of course be obvious, and their utility should become only more apparent as a result of “calibrations and improvements to come.” I see no reason, however, why the dukkha must be restricted to the courtroom, the classroom, and the Department of Health and Human Services. There exist many aspects of society whose failings we continue to evaluate by means that seem unnecessarily crude and subjective: movies, plays, and television shows, for instance; books and records; restaurants, politics, fashion, fads, language, technology. Surely the dukkha could serve us well in all these arenas, its range capable of encompassing the painful personal and national impact of everything from the most trifling dental surgery all the way up to voice-mail systems or the return of Linda Ellerbee to network broadcasting. Why mince words? If something's a demigadukkha, I want to know about it.

—Cullen Murphy

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Separate and Equal

To many black parents, a desegregated school is less important than a good one. A growing number even prefer to send their children to an all-black school, if it is nearby and the equal of any in the system

IN 1961, WHEN a black dentist named A. L. Dowell sued the Oklahoma City School Board for refusing to grant his son Robert admission to all-white Northeast High School, the city's black population was living under Jim Crow. Robert Dowell was enrolled in the only black high school in town—Douglass, located about a mile from Northeast. Douglass teachers from those days remember the hand-me-down textbooks they had to work with,

so tattered that they had to leaf through the first few pages to divine the subject. Former students recall trudging several miles north to school from the neighborhood where blacks were confined. There were no school buses for black children.

On a summer evening twenty-three years later, in 1984, a group of school-board members ventured up to Northeast High School to speak with parents and community leaders. In the intervening years the world had turned upside down, and it was about to turn upside down again. The first great change had taken place in 1972, when, after a decade of dithering and appeals, the school board had implemented the Finger Plan, a desegregation plan that called for the mandatory busing of both black and white children. The Oklahoma City schools followed the trajectory of desegregated urban school systems all over the country: resistance, submission, racial tension, white flight, and peace, if not always harmony. By the end of the 1970s the school bus had lost its totemic status:

it had become an inconvenience and an irritant rather than a moral affront.

And now the school board had come to propose a return to the *status quo ante*. In 1977 a federal judge had conceded that schools could be excused from the busing plan as the neighborhoods around them became integrated. By 1984 blacks were sufficiently scattered across Oklahoma City that many of the schools could be integrated without busing. A committee of the school board, led by a black man, was proposing a return to neighborhood schools at the elementary school level. The only schools that would become "racially identifiable" would be right there in the Northeast neighborhood, which had gone from all white to all black.

The striking thing about the meeting at Northeast High that evening is that the great majority of parents spoke in favor of the new plan, despite the fact that it would return many of their children to segregated elementary schools (an option of the plan allowed black parents to send their children to a white-majority school, using trans-

The photographs in this article were taken at Oklahoma City's Longfellow Elementary School and at the Millwood School, in a nearby district.



portation provided by the school board). Civil-rights activists bitterly reproached the board members for marching backward. But the activists constituted a distinct minority, and they were seen as remnants of an older order. "It was very painful," says Susan Hermes, who chaired the school board at the time and is an advocate of the plan. "Many of these people have fought for civil rights all their lives. The most difficult part for them is to let go of that and let people work together in other ways."

The NAACP Legal Defense Fund took the school board to court, as it had two decades earlier. After five years the matter landed in the Supreme Court. The case was expected to provide the most important busing decision of recent years. In mid-January of this year the Court concluded, with a restraint somewhat disappointing to both sides, that a school board can be released from court-ordered busing and can even permit some resegregation as long as it has taken all "practicable" steps to eliminate the "vestiges" of past discrimination. The case was remanded to federal court, where it remains.

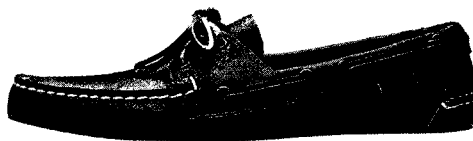
In his dissent Justice Thurgood Marshall condemned the decision as a reversal of the progress made since 1954, when the Court nullified the principle of "separate but equal" in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Many civil-rights activists, including those in Oklahoma City, have expressed fear about just this point. But most of the parents and teachers and administrators I spoke with recently during a week in Oklahoma City viewed the neighborhood plan for elementary schools in nonracial terms. Black parents often repeated what was said during the 1984 discussions at Northeast High: they believed in integration, but they were more concerned about the quality of their children's education. And they believed that their children could get an equal education in a racially separate setting—a historic change from the era of forced segregation.

I asked Arthur Steller, who came to Oklahoma City as superintendent of schools six years ago, whether desegregation had become irrelevant. Steller, a poised, dark-suited Yankee who is white, had obviously given a lot of thought to the question. He replied, "People have said historically that we need to have black youngsters in white



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schools because that's the only way they're going to get a good education. At one point in time that may have been true. However, there's nothing that makes that inherently true if you can eliminate the inequity of resources and if you put a focus and attention on reducing the achievement gaps between minority and majority students. It's more important for us to desegregate educational results than it is to physically desegregate students." When I asked Steller whether he would contemplate returning all levels of schools to a neighborhood plan, he didn't blink. "You could," he said. "We just haven't gotten in any discussion of that particular issue yet."

THE CAMPAIGN to desegregate the schools was conducted as part of the civil-rights struggle, not the education-reform movement, so most people assume that the integration of the schools was an end in itself, as was the integration of lunch counters and bus terminals. But that's not quite so. The *Brown* decision did not repudiate the doctrine of "separate but equal" as a simple violation of the equal-protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Rather, the Court concluded that "in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place." This was so because state-sponsored segregation, according to contemporary sociological research, "generates a feeling of inferiority [among excluded black children] as to their status in the community that

may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone." Black children had a right to equal education, and segregated education could not be equal.

The NAACP lawyers who argued *Brown* were explicit on this score. Robert Carter, now a federal judge in Manhattan, has written, "When we fashioned *Brown*, on the theory that equal education and integrated education were one and the same, the goal was equal educational opportunity, not integration." It was mere common sense, in the world of Jim Crow, that black children could not get a decent education without access to white facilities. That segregation also had a stigmatizing effect on black children seemed no less obvious, though the proof consisted largely of controlled experiments in laboratory-like settings; one famous example was Kenneth Clark's survey of children's racial attitudes using white dolls and black dolls.

The nature of the *Brown* decision and of the expectations it raised meant that desegregation could be both a success and a failure. It could be a success because the schools were integrated and because those schools helped knit the races together. It could be a failure because blacks could continue to lag behind whites educationally. That's more or less what has happened.

Desegregation has generally taken root where courts have ordered it, notwithstanding appalling exceptions like Boston. Ten years after *Brown* less than two percent of southern black

schoolchildren were attending schools with white children. But the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, President Lyndon Johnson's personal commitment to advance the civil-rights agenda despite the political costs of doing so, and a series of decisions at the federal and Supreme Court levels all worked together to compel recalcitrant school boards to design and implement busing plans. From 1968 to 1972 the proportion of southern black children attending schools that were at least half white shot from 19 percent to 45 percent. Then progress stalled; the figures have remained essentially stable.

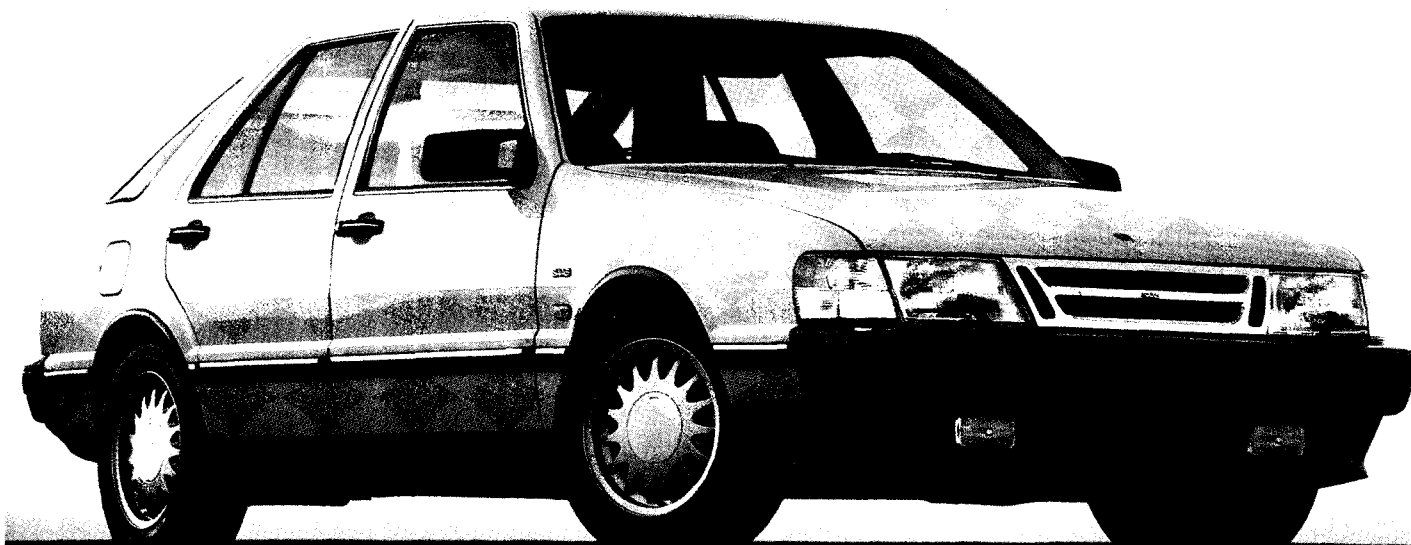
Southern schools are in fact more desegregated than northern ones. In most of the great northern cities desegregation either was never seriously tried or was tried only after so many whites had left the city for the suburbs that there simply weren't enough of them to go around. (In a 1974 ruling involving Detroit, the Supreme Court struck down a "metropolitan solution," of a kind that had also been tried elsewhere, in which children would be bused between city and suburb.) New York's schools have never been significantly desegregated, nor have those of Chicago, Philadelphia, or Detroit. But in most cities with a more equal racial balance in the schools—among them Buffalo, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, St. Paul, Louisville, Nashville, and Portland, Oregon—desegregation is a fact of life.

Desegregation, though, has not brought blacks the expected educational advantages. A task force in Milwaukee found that in the system's fifteen high schools, all but one of them integrated, blacks were scoring an average of 24 on a reading test on which white students were averaging 58. At every grade level and on virtually every index blacks lagged far behind whites. In 1990 black children nationwide scored almost 200 points lower than whites on their combined math and verbal SATs.

Of course, it is unreasonable to expect the "integration effect" wholly to compensate for the socioeconomic deficit with which many black children arrive in school. The real question is, How large is the effect? Hundreds of scholars, maybe thousands, have devoted themselves to this question. Their findings do not make a strong battle cry for a cause as unpopular as mandatory busing. A study of the studies, by Robert Crain and Rita Mahard,



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“Maybe if someone else cared if I finish school, I would too.”

“There’s this poster in my homeroom; it says ‘Be cool, stay in school.’ Yeah right.

“If you’re cool, you don’t sit in class all day.

“Maybe school works for some people—they get a job, they wear a suit—but I don’t see too many people like that where I live, and they sure don’t see me.

“They just put up their slogans and hope I buy it. But I don’t.

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concluded that most evaluations of desegregation in terms of achievement are somewhat favorable; Crain and Mahard posit an average gain of four IQ points. Gary Orfield, of Harvard University, probably the leading scholar of desegregation issues, concedes that "nothing makes a huge difference" to test scores, including integration. Orfield argues that the most beneficial effects of desegregation come later, with college and career prospects. Yet another overview, from 1988, concludes that "the impact of desegregation on college attainment is positive, though not strong, for Northern blacks." Data on career attainment are sketchy.

It may be that Kenneth Clark's experiments with dolls don't have much to do with the real world of the schools. (They were widely criticized by other social scientists in the ensuing years.) Thirty years ago, when southern governors, school boards, and sheriffs were barring the way to the schoolhouse door, this question didn't really matter. As one study after another has declared the schools a national disgrace, especially over the past decade, the debate over busing has been replaced by a far more pragmatic question: What works?

IN 1972, THE first year of its school busing plan, Oklahoma City lost more than 20 percent of its enrollment. The school board had a terrible time trying to bring the composition of each school within 10 percent of that of the system overall. White parents of-

ten finagled the placement of their children in the neighborhood school, which left other schools too heavily black. Children were shuttled all over town. The burden fell most heavily on black parents, as it generally does with desegregation, because at levels up to the fifth grade all busing was from black to white areas. Blacks, few of whom had much choice, stayed in the system, and whites, especially affluent ones, left. Local private schools quickly learned to mail their literature to parents whose children were completing fourth grade and facing the prospect of being bused to schools in black neighborhoods. Enrollment in public schools has dropped from 71,000 at the time of desegregation to 37,000 today. The racial composition of the student body has gone from 75 percent white to 45 percent white. Today, as you drive along the city's ruler-straight four-lane roads, your eye is drawn to aging red-brick structures with school names incised into the masonry and real-estate signs out front: ghostly reminders of the system as it once was.

The problem wasn't just a matter of whites fleeing blacks, or even whites fleeing busing. By the mid-seventies racial hostilities had abated, and the assignment system had become less eccentric and disruptive. But the schools, like urban schools generally in the 1970s, were in a tailspin. Many of the well-to-do parents who left had been mainstays of the system, and their children had been high achievers. School administrators had focused on racial

harmony almost to the exclusion of educational matters. State legislators, who hadn't shown much concern for public education when it was segregated, lost all interest now that it was integrated. Oklahoma City today spends less money per pupil than Birmingham or Jackson, and less than half as much as Pittsburgh or St. Louis. As a result of all this neglect, children in the late seventies and early eighties were faring worse with every year they stayed in school: elementary students who scored above the national average on achievement tests were becoming below-average high school students.

Black parents as well as white voted with their feet. Millwood, a formerly all-white neighborhood that constituted a separate school district, became a middle-class black enclave. Millwood had only one school building, which housed all the grades, and it became the separate-but-equal facility of choice for black parents. Russell Perry, the publisher of Oklahoma City's black newspaper, *The Black Chronicle*, told me that "eighty percent of black parents would send their children to Millwood if they could find a way."

Many of the black parents I spoke with mentioned the Millwood school with undisguised envy. Sandra Stutson, who recalled the years she spent at the integrated Northwest Classen High School as the formative experience of her life, said nevertheless, "I would give my eyeteeth to get my kids into Millwood." School authorities, she said, have begun cracking down on nonresident parents trying to sneak their children in. "I just haven't found a way of getting an electricity bill with my name on it and an address in Millwood," she told me.

It was in this demoralized atmosphere that the school-board committee introduced its proposal to return to neighborhood schools at the elementary level. One reason the idea encountered so little resistance from black parents is that their children were the ones being bused in the first through the fourth grades. Even the Urban League, which had helped shape the Finger Plan, initially supported the proposal, though the NAACP opposed it. Leonard Benton, the head of the Urban League, recalls that parents had been complaining about the busing of young children from the outset, on grounds of equity. "The real concern

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among black parents," Benton says, "was the unfairness of the one-way busing." Benton now supports the establishment of a giant "educational park" to which all children would be bused. The proposal sounds wildly expensive and cumbersome, but Benton claims that it would correct the inequity and provide quality education.

Arthur Steller took over as superintendent of the Oklahoma City public schools in 1985, the year the elementary school neighborhood plan was implemented. His previous posting had been Mercer County, in the most backward region of West Virginia. Steller was a convert to the "effective schools" movement, whose tenets had been laid out a decade earlier by the late black scholar Ronald Edmonds. Edmonds had insisted that social scientists like James Coleman and Christopher Jencks were flat wrong in concluding that, as he put it, "family background causes pupil performance." What counted, he said, were the characteristics of the school. In schools that focus on basic skills—schools with high expectations and a secure sense of authority—any child can learn, Edmonds argued. The racial composition of the school was largely irrelevant. "Desegregation," Edmonds said, "must take a backseat to instructional reform."

IN OKLAHOMA CITY, Arthur Steller committed himself to desegregating educational results. Steller instructed every school in the system to break down achievement-test results

by race, gender, and socioeconomic status. Each school would be responsible for reducing gaps to within specific limits and for applying the tenets of the effective-schools movement in whatever ways seemed relevant. Schools were encouraged to bring low achievers into before-school and after-school programs, and also programs on Saturdays and during vacations. Steller and the school board raised graduation requirements, eliminated many electives, and stressed advanced-placement courses.

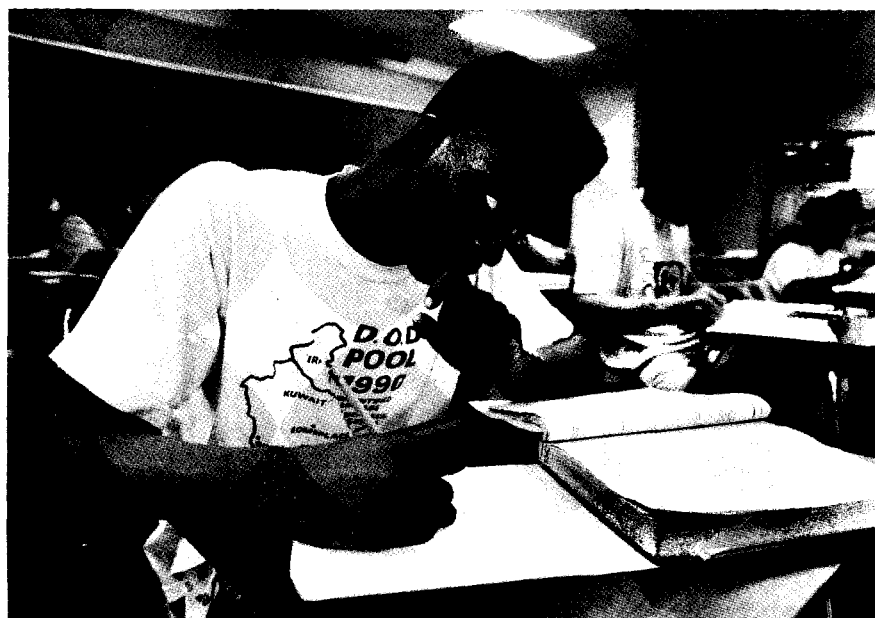
From 1988 to 1990 Oklahoma City's black students moved from the 43rd to the 49th percentile on achievement tests; blacks from the most disadvantaged backgrounds jumped from the 36th to the 45th percentile. White students also advanced—from the 65th to the 68th percentile. The "Dowell schools"—the ones that under the neighborhood plan have been effectively resegregated, so that they are virtually all-black—each receive \$40,000 in additional program funding, and students in them have recorded the largest advance, from the 34th percentile in 1986–1987 to the 48th in 1989–1990. The system-wide dropout rate has also fallen considerably during Steller's tenure. Earlier this year the American Association of School Administrators gave Steller its annual award in recognition of these changes.

The Dowell schools have become the basis on which Steller's experiment is judged. I spent a morning at Longfellow, an elementary school whose en-

rollment consists of two white, one Hispanic, and about 250 black children. Seventy percent of the children are eligible for the federal free-lunch program, which means that Longfellow is one of the least impoverished of the Dowell schools. Many, if not most, of the kids come from single-parent families, and at the end of the day a grandparent or an elder sibling is likely to come fetch them. Still, the surrounding streets are lined with houses, not apartment blocks or projects. It is not nearly so mean a setting as that of the average inner-city school. In the playground the basketball court was cracked and the rims had been torn off the backboards by middle-school students on one of their regular rampages, but the principal, Beverly Story, assured me that new rims would arrive in a few days. The school was clean and orderly and at least superficially well equipped. The students were quiet when they were supposed to be, and noisy the rest of the time.

Longfellow has become a Dowell showcase, because over four recent years achievement levels have risen from the 35th percentile to the 62nd. Teachers at Longfellow attribute the improvement to Story's focus on basic skills and her insistence on retesting and reteaching until a child has achieved mastery. Story talks about the extra funds she's able to pry loose from the school board on short notice, but even more about Edmonds's effective-schools tenets and the renewed involvement of parents, who now live much closer to where their children go to school, usually only a few blocks away. Story, who, like Steller, is white and a Yankee, acknowledges the arguments for integration, but says, "A lot of these kids weren't making progress in desegregated schools. The advantage of the neighborhood schools is that you can target aid to them much more easily."

Still, as an experiment in separate-but-equal the Dowell schools have a long way to go. Last September the Equity Committee, which had been charged by the school board with monitoring the treatment of black students once the neighborhood plan went into effect, kicked up a mighty storm by claiming that the all-black schools were worse than a group of "comparison schools" in the city, which it had selected—not only in test scores but also



in "teacher performance" and in some cases physical facilities. The report arrived a month before the school board was to defend the neighborhood plan before the Supreme Court. It was a potentially disastrous conjunction, and the board took the extraordinary step of rejecting the report and firing the paid "equity officer." Arthur Steller produced hundreds of pages of memos, statistics, and directives to refute the committee's findings, which he charged were motivated by a "personal political agenda"—to subvert the board's argument before the Court.

The report was tendentious and almost certainly unfair, given the strides made by black students and especially those in the Dowell schools, but it was also a sign that the black community intends to hold Steller to his promises. The fact is that family background *does* strongly influence pupil performance, but black parents are even less inclined than reform-minded school administrators to accept the idea of predestined outcomes. The equity-committee report also touched a sensitive nerve—the expectation of blacks that whites will deny them their fair share. Thelma R. Parks, the president of the board, who voted to accept the report, says, "There are still pockets of segregation in the system." Some black parents have seized on a supposed preponderance of inexperienced teachers in all-black schools to argue that their children are not getting the educational opportunities given to others. In the Dowell schools, Parks says, "those teachers just assume that the black children are going to fail," and thus reinforce the students' low expectations.

THE PASSION play of court-ordered desegregation remains in the memory of veteran teachers in the Oklahoma City schools, but little of it is visible in the schools themselves, and the surprise is how little attention anyone pays to the issue of integration. A few years ago a fight at a sandwich shop erupted between a white student and a black one attending Northwest Classen High School, and when the members of their respective factions joined them, a minor race riot ensued; but this was cited to me as an anachronism. Racial issues tend to be more subtle now. Charles Albritton, a guidance counselor at Classen who recalls the bad old days when black

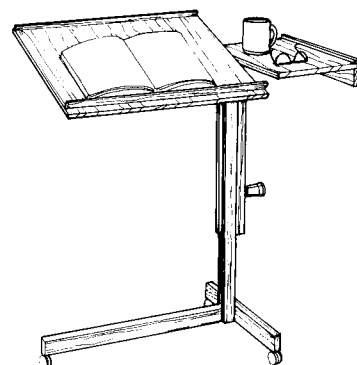
kids from the projects butted up against privileged whites in Classen's hallways, told me that although those days are gone, black students still complain of bias from white teachers.

Oklahoma City's principal gangs, the Bloods and the Crips, have members at Classen, but the principal, Richard Vrooman, has succeeded in minimizing their presence. Students at Classen say that "Northeast is a gang school," but at their own school an atmosphere of harmony appears to reign. Classen is 40 percent white and 35 percent black, with the remainder Asian, Hispanic, and Native American. No student or teacher I spoke with could remember a recent racial incident inside the school. Both the official school attitude and spontaneous comments reflected the belief that desegregation is a good thing.

One morning I asked the students in Elizabeth Grove's eleventh-grade English class what, if anything, it meant to them to be going to an integrated school. A black girl sitting up front, Katrina Watson, had just said that she had as many white friends as black friends, that race wasn't an issue, when Erin Bixler, a timid-looking pale blonde girl sitting behind her, piped up. Erin had grown up in Bethany, an all-white suburb just west of Oklahoma City. When her family moved, she was enrolled at Taft, a middle school near Classen. "I was scared to death," she said. "I didn't know anything about black people. We'd hear all these things in Bethany about how you were going to get beaten up in those schools, you were going to get killed." After a few weeks of terror she discovered that she had nothing to be afraid of. Now Erin considers her friends in Bethany hopelessly benighted. "The schools there all have air-conditioning and they're carpeted and everything else, but I like it more here."

As I was leaving, another student beckoned me over. His name was Ryan Veirs, and he had arrived just last December from the little town of Quinton, in eastern Oklahoma. His story was like Erin's only more so. "There wasn't a black within twenty miles of Quinton," he said in a deep drawl. "It was heavy, heavy KKK." When he arrived at Classen, he fully expected to have to fight for his life. He joined the wrestling team, which turned out to include only one other white kid. To his

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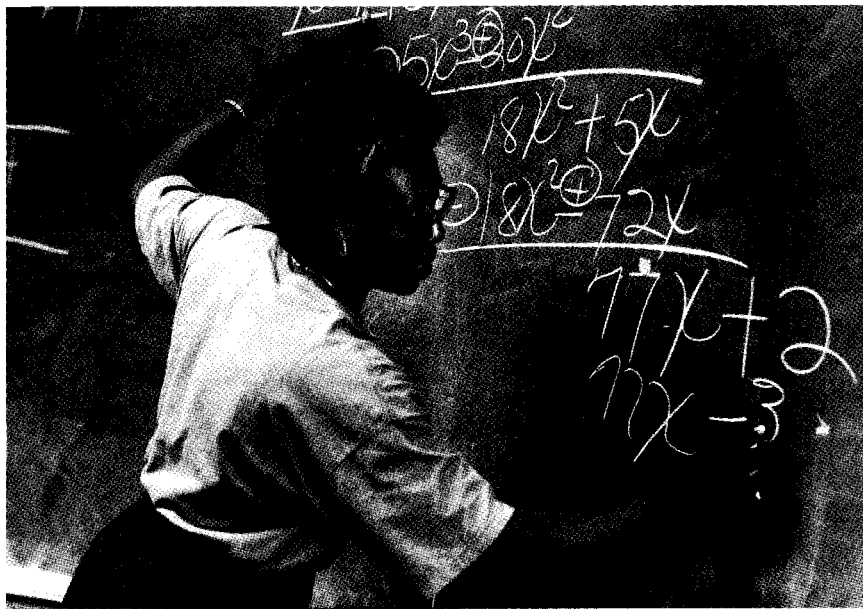
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amazement and utter relief, he was befriended by the other members of the team. He told me with great pride that he now regularly hangs out with his black friends.

A high school is probably one of the most highly ramified social organizations in the universe, so I was scarcely in a position to say, after a few days, exactly how integrated Classen is. In the cafeteria blacks, whites, Asians, and Hispanics generally isolated themselves; the same was true in the parking lot as the students drove home. But they thought of racial and ethnic grouping as natural. There was group identity, but there was latitude for individual nonracial choice. I heard both sides on the question of whether a black kid would come under pressure for dating a white; it was a riskier choice for a black girl.

Teachers generally seemed to take what desegregation researchers call the "color-blind" attitude. I asked one teacher of an honors class whether tracking had the effect of separating students along racial lines. No, she said; her class faithfully represented the school's racial balance. In fact I counted four black students and about twenty whites—far from the school's overall racial balance. Another teacher said that she had stopped noticing who was white and who was black. Many of the students made no such pretense. When I asked about interracial friendships, several kids said to me that only whites who "acted black" had many black friends. A ninth-grade girl

thought that it worked the other way as well, but older students assured me that there was virtually no such thing as a black who "acted white."

One day at the Taco Bell just south of Classen, I found two tables of black and white kids killing time over lunch. A black freshman, James Williams, immediately appointed himself the group's designated talker. He enjoyed a measure of fame as the wide receiver who had caught the touchdown pass that had ended the Classen Knights' astounding forty-two-game losing streak. When I asked about desegregation, James said, half jokingly, "I think it really has an effect on white people." After James's monologue wound down, one of his white friends said, with mock gravity, "I'm actually black. I'm just white on the outside." So am I, said another.

It's paradoxical, but scarcely absurd, to suggest that desegregation provides as much of a benefit to white students as to blacks. I was scarcely the first person to notice the sense of relief and pride that white students felt in having achieved nonchalance with blacks. A study of five desegregated schools by two scholars, Janet Ward Schofield and H. Andrew Sagar, found "a reduction in the almost automatic fear with which many students, especially whites, responded to members of the other race." Schofield and Sagar also criticized the predominant view of desegregation as "a procedure designed to *help blacks*," rather than "to foster a two-way flow of information and influence."

As a procedure designed to help blacks—as an education reform—desegregation has not been terribly successful in Oklahoma City, or in a great many other places. But as a cure for the pathology of racial hatred and racial fear, it may have accomplished a great deal. Racial familiarization may have more significance for black students than for whites, for whom the white-dominated larger world is a natural home. "Every black kid who's going to make it has to cross that line at some point," Gary Orfield, at Harvard, says. "And the sooner you cross the line, the better."

Desegregation is not an "issue" at Classen, and a number of teachers were upset that I talked about it. There are no interracial discussion groups, as there were in the early days of the Finger Plan. Nobody talks about the hardship of getting on a bus, or leaving the home neighborhood. Desegregation is simply there, a fact of life that stretches beyond the memory of all the kids and many of the teachers. Racial difference—in achievement, background, manner—is simply there too, generally acknowledged, at least among students. It's not a utopia, but it's a mingled world. This seemed to me to be more than enough justification for the pain and suffering Oklahoma City went through to desegregate its schools.

THE POSSIBILITY is not altogether remote that by the fiftieth anniversary of the *Brown* decision, thirteen years hence, school desegregation will be a historical artifact and a curiosity. The suburbanization of whites and the urbanization of nonwhites has made desegregation impracticable in an increasing number of places. In the forty-seven school systems that make up the Council of the Great City Schools, nonwhite students constitute three quarters of the enrollment; in 1988 the Hispanic enrollment overtook that of whites. At the same time, desegregation has lost its advocates, one by one—first the White House and Congress, then the courts, then the bulk of black intellectuals and activists. The sudden appearance in recent months, in New York, Milwaukee, Detroit, and elsewhere, of proposals for "Afrocentric" schools designed specifically for black students is signal proof of the declining prestige of

integration. When I called up the NAACP in Louisville to ask about the city's famously successful desegregated system, the head of the education committee, John R. Whiting, said that the chapter was looking seriously at the Afrocentric-school proposals. "We don't worship at the shrine of racial balance," he admonished me.

It may be that *Brown*, having served its express purpose of making equal education accessible to black children, can now safely be retired. It may be that desegregation isn't needed. At the time of the decision, the black legal scholar Derrick Bell has written, it was

a legal as well as societal impossibility to provide equality in schools that blacks were required by law to attend, in a system where such attendance was a badge of inferiority. . . . *Brown* is significant because it ended the legal subordination of blacks, removed the barriers that prevented blacks from going to school with whites, and made it possible for black parents to gain an equal educational opportunity for their children wherever those children attended school.

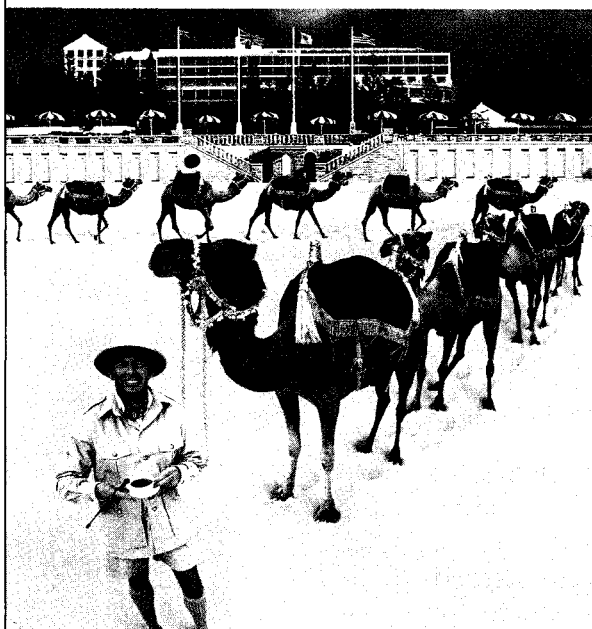
We should thus think of the offspring of *Brown* as including not only Northwest Classen High School but also the equity committee and the effective-schools movement and Arthur Steller's commitment to desegregating educational results.

And so school desegregation has lost its momentum, lost much of its constituency, and may even have lost its reason for being. What remains by way of justification for this cumbersome and intrusive process is the unmeasurable effect of growing up with schools like Classen. Some integrated environments might have the effect of reinforcing prejudices, and this point has been made by scholars of desegregation. But if they replace otherness with familiarity, if they help dissolve fear and contempt—is that so very little? As the age of desegregation gives way to the age of truly separate-but-equal, we might do well to recall something that Gunnar Myrdal wrote in *An American Dilemma*, almost fifty years ago: "The American Negro problem is a problem in the heart of the American. It is there that the interracial tension has its focus. It is there that the decisive struggle goes on."

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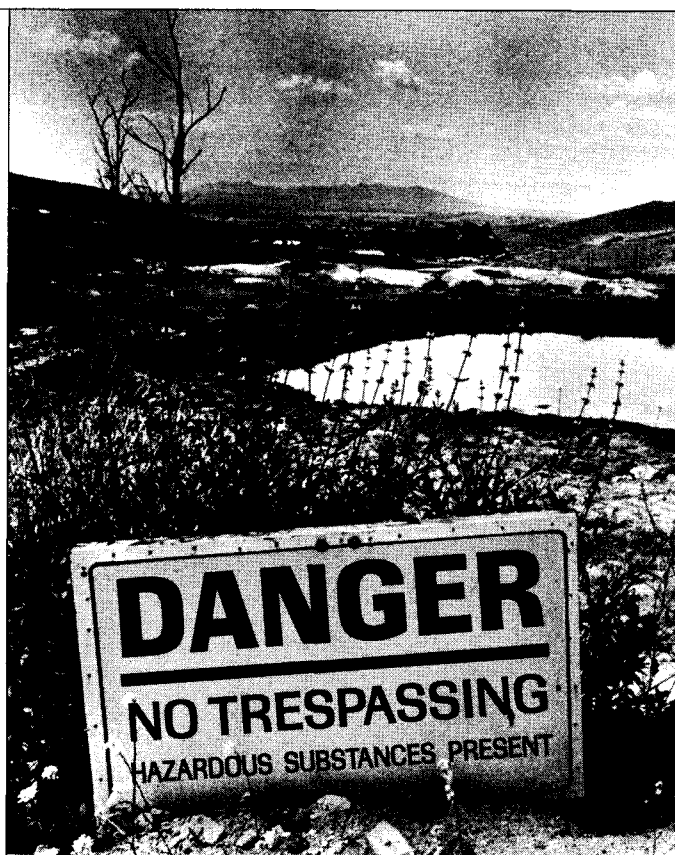
Now, after a decade of trying to make Superfund work, it's clear these assumptions were wrong and that a quick fix was never possible. What's wrong with Superfund and why has so little been accomplished?

The problem is twofold. First, the real scope of our nation's hazardous waste situation is far greater than Congress anticipated. With 1,200 priority sites already identified, growing numbers of sites are being found in every state. The Environmental Protection Agency expects that by the year 2000, there may be as many as 2,000 priority sites.

With rapidly rising cleanup costs, which now average about \$25 million per site, the eventual price tag is staggering. According to a top government agency, cleaning up all of America's hazardous waste sites could take from 30 to 60 years and cost up to \$500 billion!

A second problem is Superfund's alarming lack of progress in cleanup. A decade and billions of dollars later, fewer than 60 out of the 1,200 sites have actually been cleaned up.

Why? One major reason is Superfund's liability system. It requires that cleanup be paid for by establishing liability - who sent what waste, how much and where - and then negotiating or litigating with those believed to be responsible. While this sounds good in theory, it hasn't worked in practice. Instead, the result has been



delayed cleanup and enormous legal, consulting and other costs unrelated to cleanup.

COMPOUNDING THE PROBLEMS INSTEAD OF SOLVING THEM.

This is because working out who pays and how much for cleanup is very difficult. Under Superfund, anyone who simply used or owned the site at any time could be liable for the entire cleanup bill. Users can include major corporations, small businesses, local governments, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, even individuals. And it does not matter who caused the harm or whether they did anything wrong. Superfund's retroactive

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liability provision makes parties pay for past actions based on today's standards.

For example, at 422 sites almost 14,000 parties have been notified that they could be liable. In turn, many of them are identifying still others who contributed in some way to the presence of waste at each site. And since Superfund liability deals with past waste disposal, the record of users can go back 25, 30 or even 40 years and can number in the hundreds.

The result? The focus on cleanup has been lost as private and public parties spend years in difficult but unavoidable negotiations and litigation, trying to work out agreements that would provide funds for cleanup. At some sites, more money has been spent resolving complex factual issues than on cleanup itself. This does a lot for lawyers and consultants, but very little for the environment. And of course, these costs are eventually passed on to all of us as consumers in higher prices for goods and services. Isn't it time to stop this wasteful process and get on with cleaning up our environment?

At AIG, we think so. There is little to be gained by arguing over waste disposal that happened long ago. America needs a system that will promote fast and effective cleanup, reduce unnecessary legal fees, spread the cost of cleanup broadly, and encourage responsible waste management practices today.

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To accomplish this, we have proposed creating a National Environmental Trust Fund, similar to the National Highway Trust Fund. Its resources would be used exclusively for cleaning up old hazardous waste sites. Superfund's tough

liability provisions would still apply for future pollution, as would all other state and federal environmental laws designed to promote responsible waste management.

One way this fund could be financed would be by adding a separate fee to commercial and industrial insurance premiums in the United States. Even a modest assessment, say 2% of premiums and an equivalent amount for self-insureds, would provide about \$40 billion over the next decade - more than enough to clean up the 1,200 highest-priority sites. Without endless time and money spent on legal debates about liability.

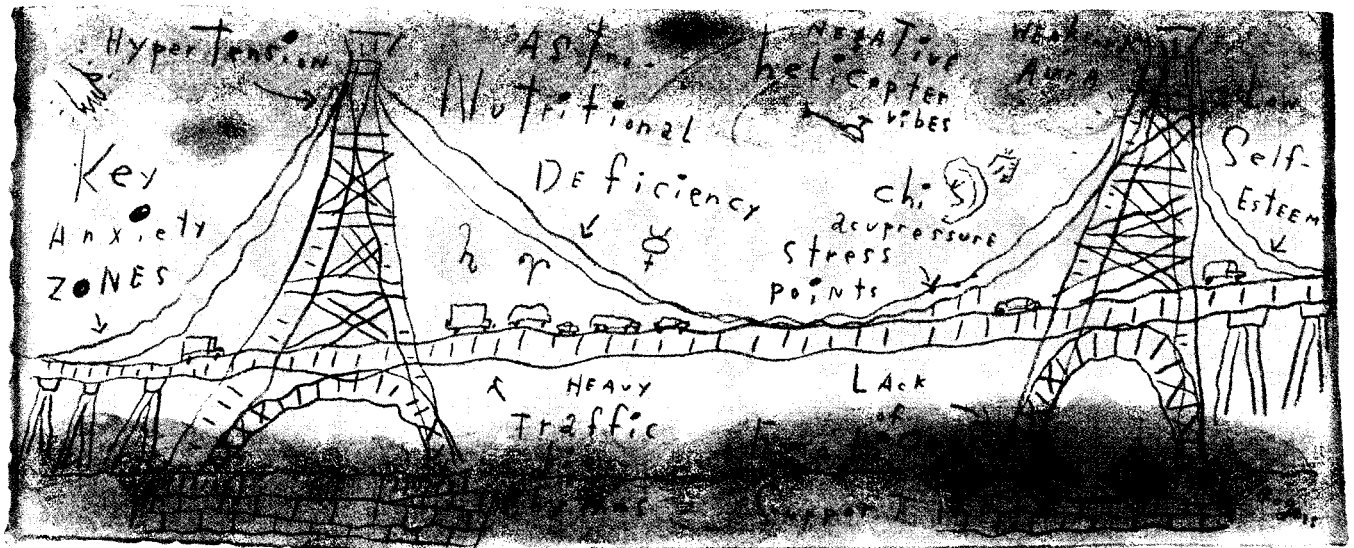
A national advisory board consisting of private individuals, industry and public officials could be charged with overseeing the program. We also suggest giving consideration to establishing local technical monitoring committees in each community. These groups of local citizens, representatives of industry and others would work with the Environmental Protection Agency and their own state on the particular cleanup site - from the very beginning of the cleanup effort.

YOU CAN HELP.

We've waited long enough and spent enough money in the courtrooms. Now it's time for action. A cleaner America should be all Americans' shared goal and shared responsibility.

To express your views, or if you would like further information about AIG's proposed National Environmental Trust Fund, write to Mr. M.R. Greenberg, Chairman, American International Group, Inc., 70 Pine Street, New York, NY 10270.

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PRINCIPLES OF HOLISTIC¹ MEDICINE APPLIED TO INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE: A TEST CASE

BY FRED CATAPANO

INTRODUCTION

Though successfully practiced in the East for centuries,² holistic medicine—that is, the treatment of the entire physical and emotional configuration of the patient instead of the solely medical aspects of the condition³—has only recently been accepted by the American medical community,⁴ and has, in fact, begun to be embraced by other professions, as its efficacy has been established.^{5,6} Last year the Skepticism Committee of the American Society of Civil Engineers commissioned the author⁷ to investigate the

nicely punctuated question “Could holistic engineering be applied to the remediation of infrastructure deterioration, and if so, how?”

Taking as a test case New York City’s ailing Williamsburg Bridge,⁸ we strove to discover which, if any, holistic principles could be employed in the maintenance of this historic and decrepit structure.⁹

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

The perception of infrastructure elements as sensitive and sentient organisms responsive to holistic treatments

has generally been resisted by the engineering profession.¹⁰ While several recent efforts have been made to introduce holism in transportation planning,¹¹ these attempts have been uniformly laughable. Monographs from other disciplines, however, have, in isolated instances, touched on the possibilities for holistic applications in the field of capital-plant maintenance:

- Bettina Collingsworth has suggested that the introduction of labor-saving mechanized repair equipment, such as jackhammers, has resulted in the loss of the “personal” aspect of maintenance.

¹ See Alistair Cooke-Simm, “Whatever Happened to the ‘W’ in ‘Holism?’” *Annals of the Anglo-American Orthographic Society*, XII (2), pp. 31–40.

² For an illuminating overview, see “Why the Japs Never Get Sick,” *Medical Corps Bulletin*, U.S. Army of Occupation (Tokyo: 1946), p. 17.

³ An excellent summary of the field is Ann Meaculpa, M.S., “You Have Only Yourself to Blame: A Holistic Approach to Health and Illness,” *Psychosomatics Today*, June, 1985, pp. 42–57.

⁴ Cf. “How You Feel May Indeed Determine How You Feel” (editorial), *N. Amer. Jnl. Obvious Med.*, XIX (3), p. 4.

⁵ E.g., Francis X. Postfacto, Esq., “A Lawyer’s Nirvana: Maybe Your Client Is a Total Legal Basket Case,” *ABA Guide to Profits* (New York: Upper East Side Press, 1982), pp. 114–239.

⁶ E.g., Steve Leisure, D.D.S., “Why Stop at the Mouth? Holistic Dentistry and the Country Home,” *Dental Dollar\$*, April, 1986, pp. 12–40.

⁷ B.A., M.A., Ph.D., *inter alia*.

⁸ Documented in *To Hell in a Handbasket: The State of the City* (City of New York: Office of the Mayor, 1988), pp. 752–806.

⁹ See “DEATHTRAP!!!” *New York Post*, May 27, 1987, p. 1.

¹⁰ E.g., Walt Macho, “To Hell With This ‘Touchy-Feely Engineering’ Crap” (interview), *Engng. News*, April, 1988, pp. 78–82.

¹¹ Notably the highly publicized 1990 Big Sur Conference on Macrobiotics and Highway Resurfacing, reported in *Transactions of the California Academy of Cosmics and Groovy Sunsets* (no volume numbers, no pagination).

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nance; she has urged a return to the more "caring" hands-on practices of earlier times. "It is no accident," she asserts,¹² "that the Great Wall of China is extant. Just think of all those delicate little Chinese hands lovingly laying stone upon stone, and think of how *good* that wall must feel."¹³

- Performance-related insecurity has been identified as a valid phenomenon by P. J. Coomeraswamy and others,¹⁴ who have suggested that phrases such as "bumper to bumper," "five-mile backup," and "thirty-minute delays" may produce deleterious effects when overheard by aboveground ferrous structures that can receive commercial-radio-transmitted motorists' advisories. Coomeraswamy believes that such structures cannot help having feelings of deep inadequacy after public ostracism over their inability to perform their vehicle-delivery tasks satisfactorily.

- Nutritional deficiencies may cause the failure of some structures' natural immune systems, according to Wallace Willis, whose work on the effects of hyperingestion of asphalt by laboratory animals¹⁵ inadvertently focused worldwide attention on an imperfectly understood aspect of highway rehabilitation programs.

- Miller and Jacobs have pointed to anxiety-accelerated deterioration in the pathology of tunnels.¹⁶ Citing the subaqueous passages' constant aware-

ness of millions of tons of overhead water pressure as a quotidian fact of life, they have hypothesized the presence of high levels of immunosuppressive chemicals in mortar joints near those cute little traffic signals on the ceiling of the Lincoln Tunnel.

- Hypertension may be a heretofore unconsidered risk to certain cold-climate roadways that undergo seasonal salting, according to Morton Freeman.¹⁷ Comparative studies of traffic-bearing infrastructure elements in upstate New York have revealed that sanding is preferable.¹⁸

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study finds merit in a holistic approach to infrastructure maintenance and urges that, as a test case, the Williamsburg Bridge be treated as a feeling, caring, and vulnerable entity. It is suggested that the following measures be implemented without delay:¹⁹

- *Change the name to Gotham Skyway.* Enhanced self-esteem, resulting from metaphoric nomenclature, will increase the structure's natural immunity to disease.²⁰

- *Provide sensitivity training to repair crews.* Recent research has suggested that inanimate objects may, in fact, be sensitive to pain²¹ and should be treated accordingly.

- *Greatly increase tolls.* Studies have shown a positive and lasting relationship between revenue production and

a sense of civic value and societal contribution.²²

- *Alter the paint scheme.* Experience indicates that primary-color infrastructures such as the Golden Gate Bridge, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the Yellow Brick Road turn out to be relatively maintenance- and trouble-free, while neutral-shade structures, such as Zane Grey Viaduct, in Arizona, and Hollywood's Shirley Temple Black Bridge/Tunnel, along with others too numerous to mention, are in virtually total disrepair.

- *Observe significant anniversaries.* No single life event causes more disheartening reactions than the failure to celebrate important dates.²³ Suitable anniversaries might include date of opening, first suicide by jumping, and other statistical milestones.

- *Clean up the neighborhoods.* Since environmental shortcomings are known to be psychic stressors, the stable but untidy neighborhoods on both ends of the bridge should be razed and replaced by landscaped promenades and waterfront revitalization.²⁴ Approach ramps should be redesigned to include flowered median malls, seductive acceleration lanes, and grassy shoulders.

CONCLUSION

The author has proposed new techniques to bridge the gaps between the past and the future. The next step is up to someone else. □

¹² Bettina Collingsworth, R.N., "Effects of Therapeutic Touch on Elevated Railway Rights of Way: An Overview," *Amer. J. Met. Nursg.*, XII (3), pp. 9-83.

¹³ For an incisive refutation, see "RR Excess Kibosh 'Screwball' Ideas," *New York Times*, June 30, 1986, p. 29.

¹⁴ P. J. Coomeraswamy et al., "Breaker One-Niner: Some Broadcasting Challenges Presented by Shakespearean Asides in *Timon of Athens* and *Coriolanus*, and Sundry Other Observations," *C.B. News 'n' Views*, December, 1978, p. 46.

¹⁵ Reported in "Laboratory Prank Yields Surprising Results," *Newsletter*, Columbia Univ. Psych. Dept., October, 1987.

¹⁶ A. B. Miller and C. D. Jacobs, "Comparison of Ante- and Post-Diluvian Shanty Roofs in Tell-el-Amarna: A Follow-up to the Leakey Study," *Competitive Archaeology*, X (1), pp. 26-219.

¹⁷ See M. Freeman, *Risk Factors Associated With Sodium in Highly Salinized Expressways* (Salt Lake City: Brigham Young Univ. Press, 1982), p. 78.

¹⁸ H. Youngman and M. Berle, "Sandy Claws: What the Cat Got When She Crossed the Desert," in J. Leno, ed., *A Treasury of Superannuated Humor* (Catskill, N.Y.: Borscht Belt Press, 1988), pp. 183-201.

¹⁹ It may already be too late. See Juan Tegucigalpa, M.D., "Holistic Interventions in the Treatment of the 'Mañana Syndrome,'" *Psychology Tomorrow*, June, 1990.

²⁰ Cf. Bud Waxman, "Correlative Productivity and Longevity Survey of 'Janitors' and 'Custodial Engineers,'" *Jrnl. Mgmt. Manipulatn.*, LVI (2), pp. 4-70.

²¹ See Mary Anderson, M.S.W., "Would You Sandblast Your Daughter?" *Neonatal Hygiene*, June, 1977, pp. 42-51. See also Bernard "Dutch" Kramer, P.E., "Highways Have Feelings Too," *Paving News*, August, 1988, p. 9.

²² A riveting example of this phenomenon is Luther Lassitude, *Call Me "Garbage": Memoirs of an Unemployed Head of Household* (Pittsburgh: Rust Belt Press, 1979).

²³ For the classic representation, see cartoon by Roz Chast in *The New Yorker*, July 12, 1985, p. 18. Captioned "Ooops!!—Sorry, Honey . . .," the illustration depicts a man standing on the left, looking at his wristwatch, while on the right a woman stands arms akimbo. The living room is a mess. In center foreground a beagle wags its tail.

²⁴ *Pro bono* work in this field has been highly successful. See "At Absolutely No Cost to the Public: A Developers' Guide to Big-City Pork-Barrel Politics" (18th ed.), in-house publication of the Trump Organization.



Normal

First, what exactly is Normal?

Well, it's an average Illinois town 35 miles east of Peoria. Which makes it extremely normal.

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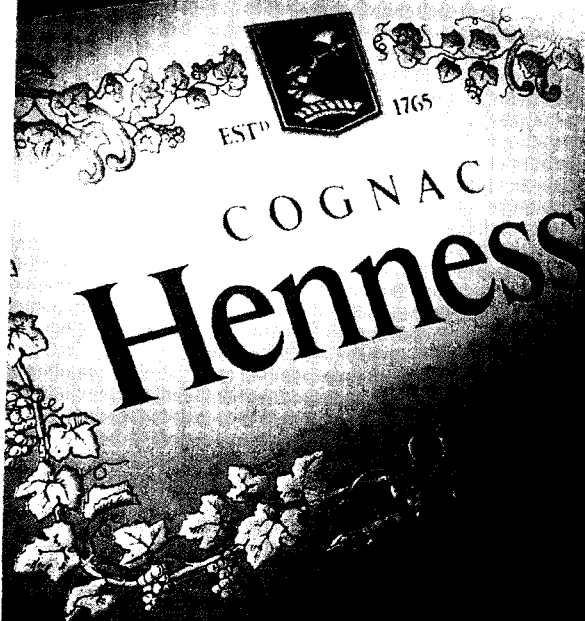
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PRAIRY EARTH

Portraits From Chase County, Kansas

BY WILLIAM LEAST HEAT-MOON



It was probably necessary that we develop an American name system, for many of our native soils are unique and should bear their own identities. But in a stroke of scientific shorthand, the soils of our central grasslands are sometimes called simply “prairyerths.”

—JOHN MADSON, *Where the Sky Began* (1982)

Kansas is the navel of the nation. . . . The statistics of the census tables are more eloquent than the tropes and phrases of the rhetorician. The story of Kansas needs no reinforcement from the imagination.

—JOHN JAMES INGALLS, “Kansas: 1591–1891” (c. 1896)

No one, I discover, begins to know the real geographic, democratic, indissoluble American Union in the present, or suspect it in the future, until he explores these Central States, and dwells awhile on their prairies or amid their busy towns.

—WALT WHITMAN, *Specimen Days* (1882)

Eternal prairie and grass, with occasional groups of trees. [Captain John] Frémont prefers this to every other landscape. To me it is as if someone would prefer a book with blank pages to a good story.

—CHARLES PREUSS, *Exploring With Frémont* (1842)

Kansas is no mere geographical expression, but a “state of mind,” a religion, and a philosophy in one. . . .

The Kansas spirit is the American spirit double distilled. It is a new grafted product of American individualism, American idealism, American intolerance. Kansas is America in microcosm: as America conceives itself in respect to Europe, so Kansas conceives itself in respect to America.

—CARL BECKER, “Kansas” (1910)

Kansas brags on its thunder and lightning; and the boast is well founded.

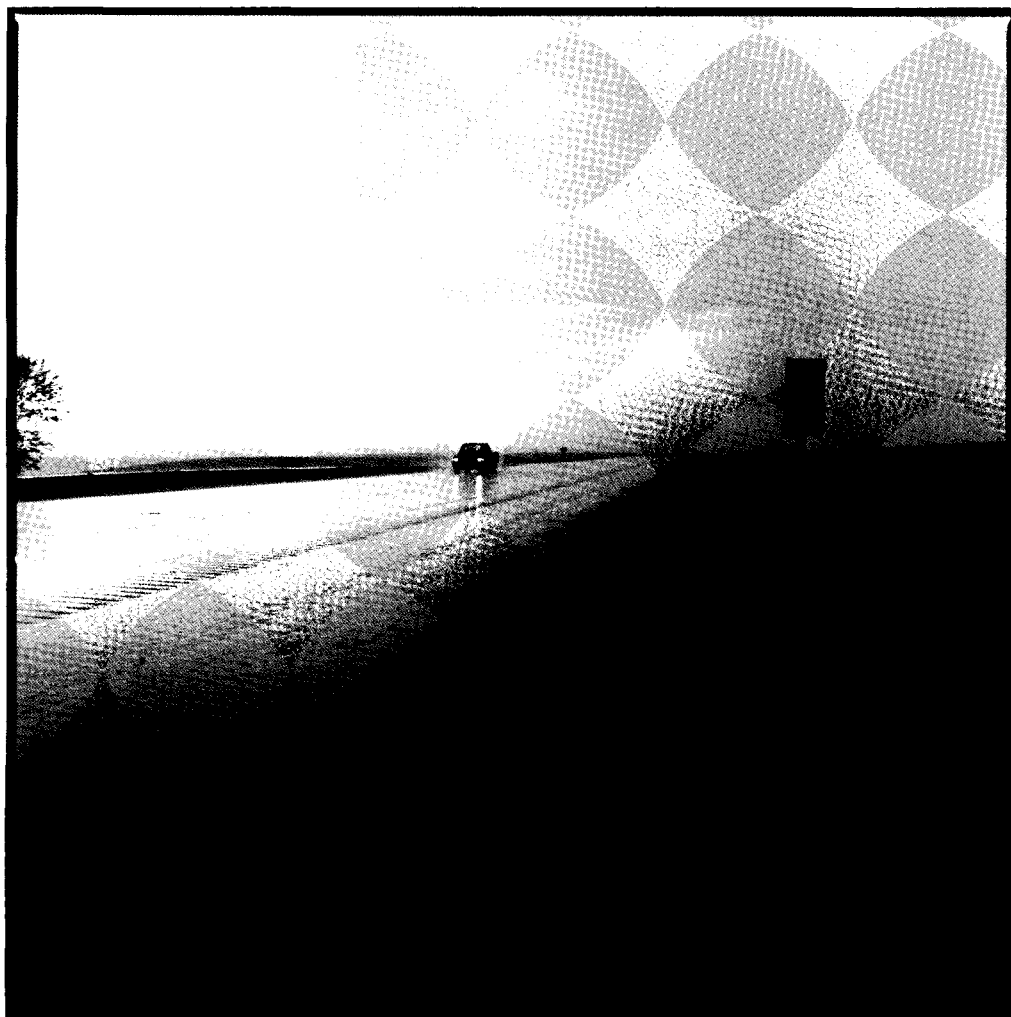
—HORACE GREELEY, *An Overland Journey* (1859)

The Flint Hills: Where the West Begins

IF YOU DRIVE FROM THE ATLANTIC OCEAN TO THE PACIFIC by the most central yet least traveled national route, you set off on U.S. 50 from Ocean City, Maryland, pass before the Capitol, ride down Constitution Avenue, past the Declaration of Independence in the National Archives, past the Washington Monument and the Truman Balcony of the White House and the Zero Milestone it looks out on, past the Lincoln Memorial, and then head into the countryside where the places are Hayfield, Virginia; Coolville, Ohio; Loogootee, Indiana; Flora, Illinois; Useful, Missouri; Dodge City, Kansas; the Royal Gorge of Colorado; Deseret, Utah; Eureka, Nevada; Placerville, California. You'll run out of Route 50 only on the Embarcadero, along San Francisco Bay, and behind will lie your course over four time zones, over the Alleghenies, along the north edge of the broken Ozark Plateau, across the Rockies, over the Sierra Nevadas. At times you will have followed the routes of the Overland-Butterfield Stage, the Pony Express, the Oregon, Santa Fe, and California trails, and the Lincoln Highway; along the entire 3,000 miles between Washington and San Francisco

you'll have seen only four other cities: Cincinnati, St. Louis, Kansas City, Sacramento. You will have closely paralleled the old "Main Street of America," Highway 40, a road that has taken most of the cities and congestion and four-lane life, and for half the trip you will also have roughly paralleled Route 66, the so-called Mother Road of the thirties. People write books about 40 and 66, but I know of nobody writing or singing about 50 (considering what fame can do, travelers of this transcontinental highway can be thankful that Bobby Troup drove Route 66). Yet for at least the past couple of generations the western center of American population has followed 50, at times edging precisely along it like an aerialist on his wire. For the unhurried, this highway is the best national road across the middle of the United States.

When an Englishwoman, inspired by Isabella Bird's travels in nineteenth-century America, asked me last year how she might see the full dimension of the country, I said by driving Highway 50 from ocean to ocean. If she begins in the East, I know the very mile when she will exclaim from behind her windshield that she has at last arrived in the American West. That spot is in Kansas, in the Flint Hills, in Chase County: if Highway 50 is a belt



**After a thunderstorm,
east of Strong City**

across the midriff of America, then the Flint Hills make a buckle cinching East to West. From where I stand, above what's left of the village of Bazaar, I can nearly see that stretch of road where the West begins. The traditional hundredth meridian be damned; at this latitude, the West starts here, obviously, definitively. What's more, Chase County, Kansas, is the most easterly piece of the American Far West.

For 1,200 miles, after driving smack through the morning shadow of the Washington Monument, my English traveler will pass from woodland to woodland—central Virginia looks much like central Missouri—but several miles across the Kansas line she'll begin to see fewer trees, see them thinning out and clustering in draws and valleys, until she notices, from the first rise of Highway 50 in Chase County, that but for the wooded vales, the trees have nearly disappeared altogether. To encounter treelessness of such distance has often moved eastern travelers—and sometimes natives—more to discomfiture than to rapture. Of the prairie, Willa Cather wrote in *My Ántonia*, "Between that earth and that sky I felt erased, blotted out." The protection and sureties of the vertical woodland, walled like a home and enclosed like a refuge, are gone, and now the land, although more filled with cellulose than ever, is a world of air, space, apparent emptiness, near nothingness, where once the first travelers could walk for twelve hours and believe they had taken only a dozen steps. On a clear day of summer along this section of Highway 50 the world changes in a few miles from green to blue, from shadow to unbroken sunlight, from intermittent breezes to a wind blowing steadily as if out of the lungs of the universe.

The Flint Hills are the last remaining grand expanse of tallgrass prairie in America. On a geologic map, their shape something like a stone spear point, they cover most of the 200-mile longitude of Kansas from Nebraska to Oklahoma, a stony upland twenty to eighty miles wide. At their western edge the mixed-grass prairie begins, and spreads a hundred or so miles to the shortgrass country of the high plains. On the eastern side settlement and agriculture have all but obliterated the whilom tallgrass prairie, so that it is hardly visible to anyone who would not seek it out on hands and knees; although the six million acres of the Flint Hills—also called the Blue-stem Hills—were once a mere four percent of the American tall prairie, they are now nearly all of it. Tallgrass could mean ten-foot plants, grasses so high that red men stood atop their horses to see twenty yards ahead; that wasn't common, but it occurred, and even today, in moist vales protected from development and cattle, I've found big bluestem and sloughgrass, the grandest of the tall-grasses, eight feet high. In season these plants and their relatives make the Flint Hills an immense pasturage, nutritionally richer than the bluegrass country of Kentucky. During the spring cattle will gain two pounds a day, and the 120,000 beefs will put on 22 million pounds.

Although the height of the hills is not remarkable, never rising more than 300 feet from base to crest, their length and breadth would make them noteworthy even in places outside the somewhat level horizon of eastern Kansas; but were they forested, my English traveler would hardly know she was crossing them. Because they belong to the open world of grasses, they dominate if not the sky then surely the horizon with their symmetrical and flattened tops, their trapezoidal slopes, and (at dawn and sunset) their shadows that can stretch unbroken and most visibly for a prairie mile.

Chase County

THE POPULATION OF CHASE COUNTY WAS 3,013 AT the last counting (about what it was in 1873, when its remarkable courthouse was finished), and that's four persons to the square mile, roughly as many as in a Brooklyn flat. Chase is thirty miles long north to south, twenty-six miles east to west on the south border, and a mile shorter on the north. Five hundred and twenty-six miles of county road run Chase; four hundred and three of them are gravel, seventy-six broken asphalt, forty-six dirt, and one concrete; except for lanes twisting down creek hollows, these roads follow the cardinal compass points along section lines. Three state and federal highways cross the county: Kansas 177 splits it longitudinally, U.S. 50 crosses near its middle before breaking off into a forty-five-degree angle, and Interstate 35 (the Kansas Turnpike) takes a similar angle to link Kansas City, a hundred miles northeast, with Wichita, thirty-five miles southwest. Chase countians use these cities, but more commonly they drive to Emporia, twenty-five miles from the county center.

Of a dozen settlements, three or four can still be called villages and two are towns: Cottonwood Falls, the county seat, and Strong City. Only in these, once linked by a horse trolley, can you buy gasoline *and* groceries. When citizens want a new car or the latest novel or a pair of spectacles, they must drive to Emporia, in Lyon County. Chase no longer has a resident physician, dentist, or pharmacist, but it has six lawyers, six insurance agents, and thirteen real-estate agents. There is one high school, one middle school, two grammar schools, and sixty teachers and aides; within seventy miles of the county's borders are a couple of dozen colleges and universities. Chase has ten sites on the National Register of Historic Places (more per capita than any other Kansas county). There is a single newspaper, the weekly *Chase County Leader-News*, one public library, sixty-six volunteer firemen, six filling stations, one sheriff and two deputies, one barber, and one traffic light (flashing). There's a nine-hole golf course (sand greens, players in coveralls, hazards of curious cattle pressed to the barbed-wire fences), an airfield (grass), a gun club (Friday-night shoots), a movie house (piano still down front), and a nursing home. And so on. Before

the last world war there was more of almost everything except abandoned farmhouses and collapsing windmills.

You may see the county from one of the many trans-continental flights that pass right over it, or you may see it from an Amtrak window (no stops in the county), or you may be fired down the long, smoking bore of the turnpike that shoots across it. You may also see it from its graveled roads, dirt lanes, pasture tracks, or vestiges of historic trails, or from its couple of hundred miles of canoe-navigable waters, and you can travel it by foot or chair—that is, by walking or reading. There’s another means, too: call it dreaming, where the less-conscious mind can mouse about.

People passing through from other counties have sometimes found it a good spot to get thumped. A man from Marion, immediately west of here (now residing safely in Colorado), told me, “We used to call it Chasem County. The story there was chase ’em, catch ’em, kick ’em.” I add only that people in Cottonwood Falls will comment on the number of federal marshals shot down in Marion. But one thing is certain here: Chase County, Kansas, looks much the way visitors want rural western America to look. A college student, a Pennsylvanian working on a ranch near Matfield Green, said to me, “I can’t believe this county. I can’t believe it’s still like this. I mean, it’s so Americana.”

IFIRST ENTERED CHASE COUNTY, AS ALMOST EVERYONE traveling from the East did for a generation, along Highway 50. The year was 1952, and I was twelve years old and riding in the front seat as navigator while my father drove our Pontiac Chieftain, with its splendid hood ornament, an Indian’s head whose chromium nose we followed for half a decade over much of America. In the past few weeks I’ve probed my memory to find even one detail of my first passage into the western prairies. What did I see, feel? Nothing except the route now returns. My guess is that I found the grasslands little more than miles to be got over—after all, that’s the way Americans crossed Kansas. Still do.

In 1965, when I came out of the Navy, I drove over the prairie again on a visit to California, and the grasslands looked different to me, so alive and varied; I believe now that two years of watching the Atlantic Ocean had changed the way I viewed landscape, especially levelish, rolling things. I also had begun to see the prairies as native ground, the land my home town sat just out of sight of, and I began to like the American grasslands, not because they demand your attention, like mountains and coasts, but because they almost defy absorbed attention. At first, to be *here*, to be here *now*, was hard for me on the prairie. I liked the clarity of line in a place that seemed to require me to bring something to it and to open to it actively: see far, see little. I learned a prairie secret: take the numbing distance in small doses and gorge on the little details that beckon. The prairie doesn’t give up any-

thing easily, unless it’s horizon and sky. Search out its variation, its colors, its subtleties. It’s not that I had to learn to think flat—the prairies rarely are—but I had to begin thinking open and lean, seeing without set points of obvious focus, first noticing the horizon and then drawing my vision back toward middle distance, where so little appears to exist. I came to understand that the prairies are nothing but grass as the sea is nothing but water, that most prairie life is *within* the place: under the stems, below the turf, beneath the stones. I came to understand that the prairie is not a topography that shows its all but rather a vastly exposed place of concealment, like the geodes so abundant in the county, where the splendid lies within a plain cover. At last I realized I was a man not of the sea or coasts or mountains but of the grasslands. Once I understood that, I began to find all sorts of reasons why, and here comes one:

I am driving west of Emporia, Kansas, on Highway 50 where it takes up the course of the two-mile-wide and east-running Cottonwood River, and I’ve just entered the prairie hills through a trough of wooded bottom that runs some way into the uplands before the road rises out of the floodplain to reveal the open spread of grasses. The change is sudden, stark, surprising. If I kept heading west, I would ride among the grasses—tall, middle, short—until I crossed the prairie and the plains (the words are not synonyms) and climbed into the foothills of the Rockies. By following Route 50 into Chase County, up out of the shadowed woodlands, out of the soybean and sorghum bottoms, and into the miles of something too big, too wild, to be called a meadow, I am recapitulating human history, retracing in an hour the sixty-five-million-year course of our evolution from some small bottom-dwelling mammal that began to climb trees and evolve and then crawl down and move into the East African savannas. It was tall grass that made man stand up: to be on all fours, to crouch in a six-foot-high world of thick cellulose, is to be blind and vulnerable. People may prefer the obvious beauty of mountains and seacoasts, but we are bipedal because of savanna; man is man because of tall grass. When I walk the prairie, I like to take along the notion that although my blood may long for the haven of the forest, its apprenticeship in the trees, it also recognizes this grand openness as the kind of place where it became itself.

Now: I am in the grasses, my arms upraised, spine and legs straight, everything upright like the bluestem, and I can walk a thousand miles over this prairie, but I can’t climb a tree worth a damn.

On Highway 50, exactly two miles west of the eastern Chase County line (man-made things are often exact distances here, because they grow up along section-line junctures), a gravel road crosses the highway, and I am walking it southward, toward where it passes over old Route 50 and then over the old Santa Fe tracks and then the new tracks, and then drops steeply down the high

RELIABLE THAN OTHERS.



Fortunately, for those who appreciate classics, not all of them come with four wheels. Woolrich, for instance, has been around for over 160 years and, as far as we know, we've yet to leave anyone stranded twenty miles from town.

EAGLES NEST



BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN SPORTS

grade to the oldest Route 50 and runs a mile to the Cottonwood River. Between tracks and river stand four houses, a brick school, and, off in a grove, a wooden depot used as a storage shed, and the sign, although fading, still says SAFFORDVILLE.

Saffordville: population five, the youngest fifty-five, the oldest eighty-five. The village, once called Kenyon (I haven't discovered why), takes its name from a Kansas judge who advocated passage of the Homestead Act of 1862. I am in the grass and scrub that was once the town. I climb concrete steps leading to nothing and shuffle down native-stone sidewalk slabs going nowhere. Ahead is the concrete cooler house of a grocery; behind, the block shell of an auto garage. In 1940 two hundred people lived here. No town in the county has increased its population since the Second World War, and what I am about to say is true of other villages nearby, the two towns excepted. As a form of shorthand, let me call this dying the Saffordville syndrome: in the thirties the town had a doctor, three stores, two schools, one hotel, a blacksmith shop, a lumberyard, a creamery, a café, barber and butcher shops, a bank, a garage, a church, and five lodges (Masons, Woodmen, Eastern Star, Royal Neighbors, Ladies Aid). These happened: farmers needed fewer hands to get a good crop from the rich bottoms, and bigger implements required more land to make them pay; automobiles and paved roads opened the commerce of Emporia (so properly named); county schools consolidated.

That much is general American history. Saffordville added a detail that, in one Kansan's words, "capped the climax." Speculators trying to make a killing by inventing towns and then selling lots laid out Saffordville not just between Buckeye and Bull creeks but also on the first terrace of the Cottonwood River, so that heavy rains rush the village from three sides, and on the south a high bluff forces the Cottonwood in flood northward toward Saffordville, where the high railroad grade dams it. The effect was something like building a town at the bottom of a funnel; even after the citizens cut away a loop in the river, it didn't drain fast enough during a flood. In the 1940s an old raconteur wrote,

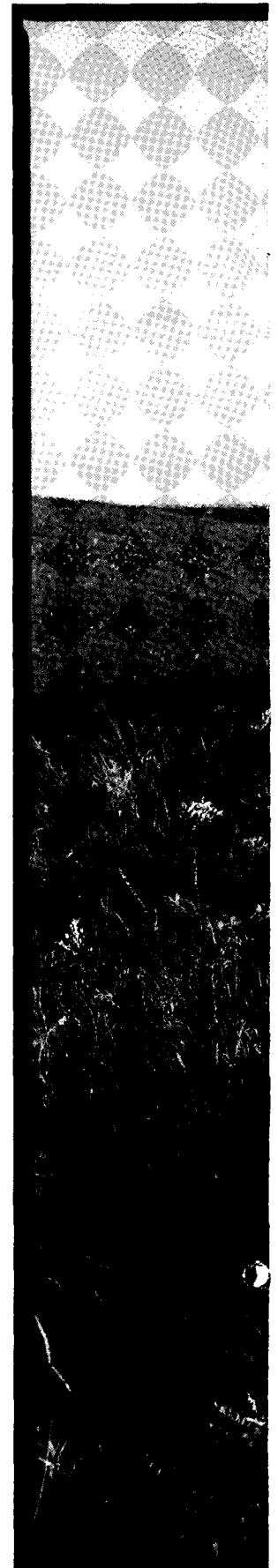
The Indians used to warn settlers who settled near the river. They said they had seen the water from bluff to bluff. The settlers did not pay any attention to the Indians warnings, and in 1904, there came a flood and the Cottonwood River overflowed its banks and flooded everything. Two weeks later it overflowed again, which was the last flood for nineteen years. Again in 1923, there came another flood. It was the last one until 1926. In 1929 there were two floods—one in June and the other in November. In the period from 1923 to 1929, the river overflowed eight times.

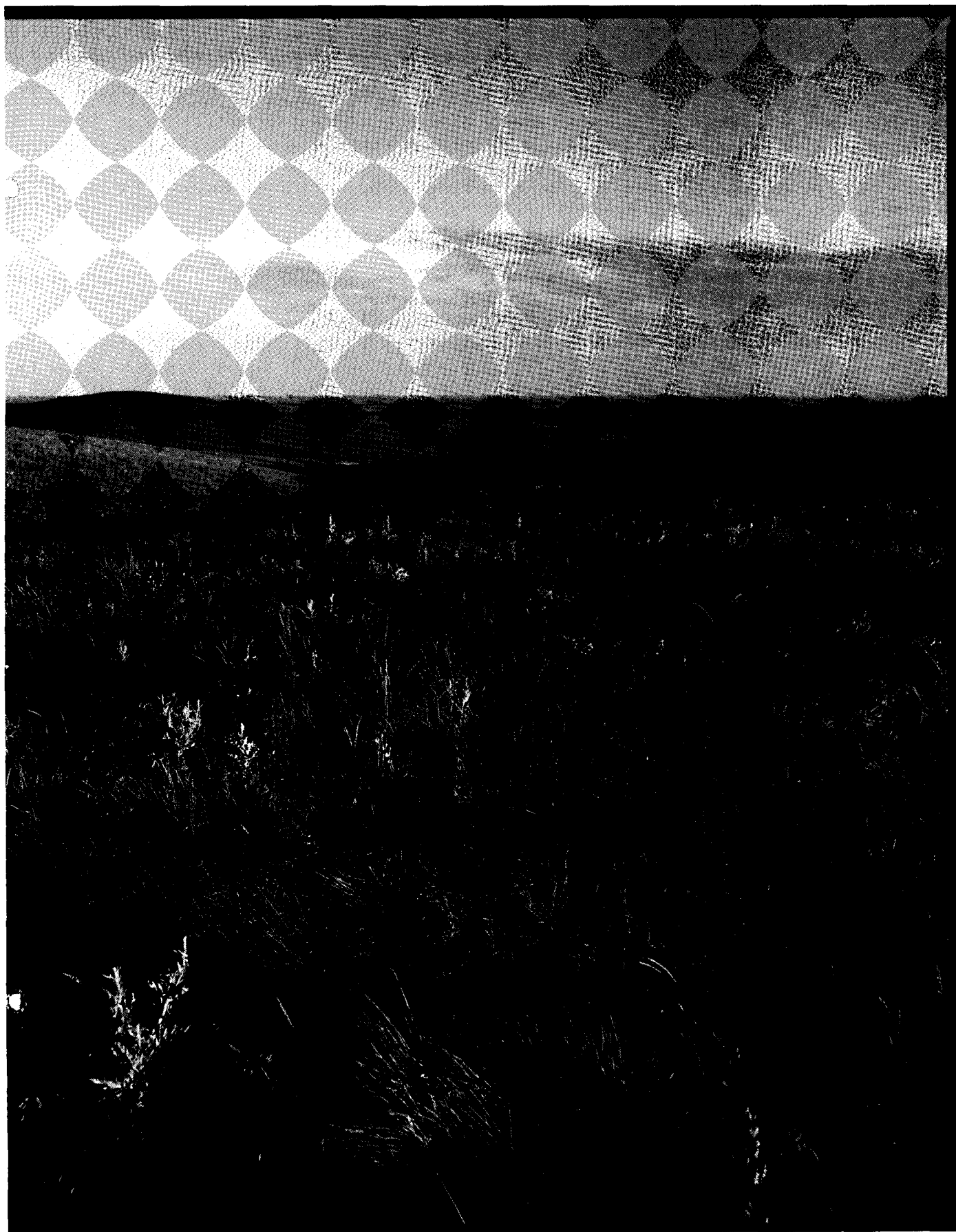
And then, as if to prove that these floods were not mere and rare chances of nature, in 1951 the Cottonwood flooded four times, the last the worst in white men's memory. Less than a hundred feet wide here, this river,

*I came
to understand
that the prairies are
nothing but
grass as the sea
is nothing
but water, that most
prairie life
is within the place:
under the stems, below
the turf, beneath
the stones.*



Along the Madison-
Eureka Road,
southeastern Chase County





which had caught fire from an oil-well spill a generation earlier, and two generations before that had gone dry (countians tell of walking the twelve miles to Emporia on the riverbed and of helplessly standing by their empty wells and watching their houses burn to the ground that summer)—this same river gathered the waters of its tributaries, running full of July rains, and went overnight from five feet deep to thirty feet, and took off once again across the valley, just as it was to do in 1965, 1973, 1985. Had there been an economic reason for Saffordville to continue, these repetitions of muddy water would have been serious drawbacks, but in the absence of reasons beyond the inertia of initial settlement, the Cottonwood, like a wronged red man, finally drove out the town. A fellow told me, "That river ate our dinner once too often." The residents packed up possessions, picked up their houses and church and even some of the stone-slab sidewalks, and moved a mile north to the higher ground of faceless Toledo, a mere assembling of houses that happen to stand in some proximity. Since the big flood of 1951 only two families have stayed on in Saffordville, and a couple of decades ago another moved in. To my knowledge, no one around here thinks them crazy.

On the First Terrace

I AM AT THE DINNER TABLE IN TOM BRIDGE'S HOUSE, A solid one-and-a-half-story red-brick, red-tile-roof place built in 1921 in Saffordville. Although it's not a big house, even today it stands out in the county. For twenty-five years Tom Bridge, tall and angular, has taught geology at Emporia State University, but he grew up on the Colorado grasslands at the foot of the Front Range.

In 1966 Tom got lost and drove into Saffordville and asked the old banker's son for directions to a piece of land he was considering buying. The son said he might sell Tom his house, and later he did, and Bridge knew all along that the house sat in the floodplain of the Cottonwood River. He moved in with his wife, Syble, and their four children, and it's quite possible that Tom and Syble will be the last citizens of Saffordville. From 1966 to 1973 they averaged a flood a year, but the water never got out of the basement. Tom didn't complain about the water but he did about Syble's overstocking canned goods, because they seemed a needless burden. In 1985 the river began to swell, and the Bridges began raising furniture, and they were soon out of bricks and concrete blocks, and they started setting cans of corn, tomato soup, and V-8 juice under the furniture legs. Of the three inhabited houses remaining in Saffordville, the Bridges' is the farthest from the river but on the lowest ground, and it isn't feasible to raise their brick house, as their neighbor did his big two-story frame place. So while the radio crackled out flood updates, the Bridges put down cans of chili and pork and beans—their sole defense against the river, and

not much more effective than wet towels against dusters.

As goes the Cottonwood, so goes Chase County: through the quarter-billion-year-old limestone hills the typically slow waters have cut a sixty-mile dogleg trough, northeast, east. Before the recent building of several impoundments, all the storm runoff in the county, except from two small portions in the south, along with much of the drainage of Marion County, rolled past Saffordville. Although nearly every village in Chase sits in the valley of the Cottonwood or one of its tributaries, only Saffordville, on the east, sooner or later gets the runoff from 1,700 square miles, an immense drainage for such a small channel. Without the Cottonwood watershed there would never have been much settlement in Chase or agriculture other than upland grazing, and the railroad and Highway 50 would not likely have passed this way, since transport crosses the hills through the gaps cut by the Cottonwood and the South Fork. The valleys hold the towns and the cultivation, but only 14 percent of the county is bottomland, and it is the rain falling on the other 86 percent, the uplands, that creates floods. Like Kane, an ancient Hawaiian god of creation, the Cottonwood gives life and destruction with equal nonchalance.

Now the river is rising:

The uplands, in saturation, can no longer hold the rain, and they slough it down the slopes to the creeks where a few days earlier quiet waters flowed blue-gray, the color of moonstone, but now they climb banks and rip off ledges with mad turnings of earthen roil, and where they join larger streams, they meet walls of water and back up until the whole county, its veinings of waterways become a huge thrombus, starts to overflow, and the word goes out by radio, by neighbors in pickups: "River's on the rise!" And all the time it's raining, raining so long that the *Emporia Gazette* has time to print front-page jokes about it: "If you've been saving for a rainy day, brother, this is it." Raining, and the Cottonwood, now thirty feet deep, tops out and starts across the bottoms and begins losing its hundred serpentines as it straightens itself to fit the more linear contours of the valley, and the word goes out, "Take high ground!" and people wonder, *Am I high enough?*, and now only parallel lines of cottonwoods and sycamores and willows mark the usual river course, and a man stands on a bridge and remembers how last week his rowboat hardly moved in the slow river when he fished east of the old milldam, and now the silent river has voice, loud, and one fellow says to his son, "It's that sound I don't like," and farmers start their combines and tractors (and one machine won't fire up) and move them to higher ground. "How high is high enough?" "Is there time to get the cattle out?" And everywhere along the South Fork and the Cottonwood the usual argument: "I'm not leaving. This is where I live. This is mine." And the old, benign river turns malevolent, and a farmer shouts at his wife, "It's sweeping us away!" and she won't listen, because women here are al-



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Flood lines,
Tom and Syble Bridge's
garage

ways the last to leave, and out back the corn and milo are going under, green to brown, and she shouts, "I'm going upstairs!" and he shouts, "No you're not!" And she: "It's not going to take my house while I stand up on the bluff, not this river!" And he: "It ain't no river now!" It's a thing moving as if it knows what made this valley and knows its million-year right of tenancy, and it's going to tear out the fences and flush the squatters and their privies away and scrub the valley of the septic intrusion and let them go down with their hogs and stories of Noah.

The river has risen.

THIS IS SYBLE BRIDGE, SMALL AND TRIM. SHE SAYS to me, "The problem isn't the water, really; it's the mud that stays behind. The water drains out. The mud settles." And Tom says, and he is thinking of Dust Bowl days, too, "We get that same layer, the same type of dust or mud precipitated out of water." I'm laughing, and I say, All your life you keep getting soil in your house from one agency or another. You're an earth scientist, and earth keeps coming in to live with you. It must make you glad you're not an entomologist. Or a mortician.

I ask, Where did you see the water first? and she says, "In '85 I opened the basement door, and it was coming up the stairs at me. It was rising faster than we'd seen it do before. I'd already gotten my home-canned goods out of the basement, and then they went under up here: sweet pickles and dills. Afterward we were afraid to eat them, but we ate the stuff in tin cans. Two dozen jars of pickles, still pretty and green, went to the dump, along with some furniture and mattresses and rugs: three flat-bed-truck loads. You understand, in '85 we never left the house. That's the way it is for us here—our neighbors, Edith and Frances, don't leave either. We have one room upstairs, and Tom and I go up to it, but we come down in our rubber boots and sit in the water to eat at the table. The man who built this house, Bill ImMasche, the banker, did the same thing: went upstairs and waited it out. During a flood Stanley North always came up to the back of the house in a rowboat to bring Bill his paper and mail and milk every day. In '51 they took the screen off the upstairs window to pass things in. Before he pulled away, Stanley said, 'You want this screen back on?' 'No,' says Bill. 'Leave it off. I'll swat flies. It'll give me something to do.' The floods never bothered him, but people say

that his wife's severe heart trouble came from worrying over this house flooding. He watched his pennies, but she shook him loose to build this place."

The Bridges have lived here twenty-two years, and I ask why they haven't at least built a levee around the house, a four-foot berm should do it, and Tom says, "When we get time," and I ask whether living here makes them watch the sky, and he says, "We've had floods when we've had no rain on our place. We have to listen to the radio, go down to the bridge to check on the river, especially at night, when we can't see it coming over the fields."

Syble says, "When the forecast is for flood, Tom starts moving vehicles to higher ground, and I mow the lawn so the grass clippings will wash away. If the forecast was for flooding tomorrow, I'd head right now for the canned goods, especially juice cans, the forty-six-ounce size. Two years ago it was ten inches in this room, but in '51 it was five feet, and that's what damaged the house. When we bought it, we had to put everything inside back together. We decorated with the idea that things would probably get wet." Now Syble is setting the table to serve a pork loin and mashed potatoes and broccoli, and she says, "In high water it gets quiet. About all we hear is the water slopping outside."

Tom: "This house is a riverboat that won't float. I'll look out a window and see carp jumping on the lawn. Frogs in the basement. Cordwood floating off the porch."

And Syble: "I looked out the window in '85 and saw the workbench float out the garage. An eddy carried it away. It wasn't a regular workbench: it was an old grand piano that had been gutted, but it had fancy carved legs. We kept tools and nails sitting on it. We watched it float out, go past the house, moving right along. It stopped over east, in Edith's field, tools still on top of it."

Tom: "I had three Honda motorcycles in the garage. They went beneath. There isn't time to get everything, so we go for the books first, then things in the basement. I turn off the electricity if water's coming upstairs. Syble got shocked the last time. You'll feel the electric current in the water, a kind of vibrating; it can kill you. We take oil lamps to the second floor. The toilet stops working, the bathtub backs up with foul stuff. There's no question a flood's inconvenient."

Syble: "You don't live in a floodplain and get excited about water. Now, a tornado gets us excited. Tom calls us collectors who need a flood every so often to clear things out anyway. When the water drops, we get the brooms and hose and squirt it and keep the water riled up, make it take the mud back out. If you let the mud dry, it's like concrete. We pump out the basement."

The Bridges have no flood insurance, and Tom tells me he sold their canoe, and Syble says, "I wouldn't want to be out in a flood in a canoe." They don't have a CB radio to make up for losing the telephone when the buried lines short out. I ask Tom if he will see water in this

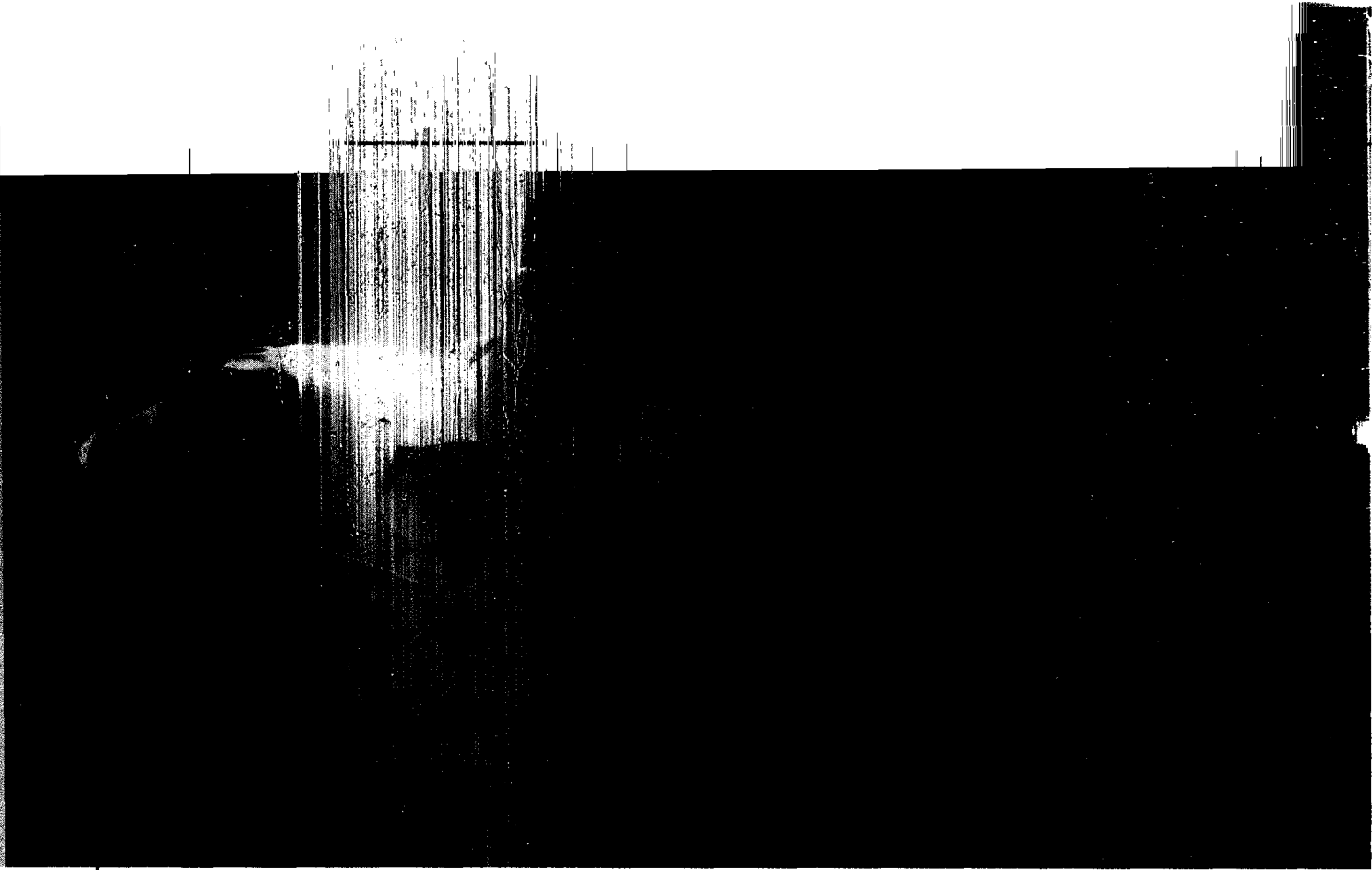
house again, and he says, "That's a real possibility, but I don't worry about it. Our lives aren't threatened. Our possessions, yes."

Now the meal is over, and we are talking about geology, and someone has said that the Kansas pioneers' great fear was drought, and I say, Since erosion is the primary geologic force in Kansas, isn't it appropriate for a geologist to live amid the cycle of flood, erosion, and deposition? And Tom says, "Twenty-two years here now and I really understand sedimentary layering, what made these hills."

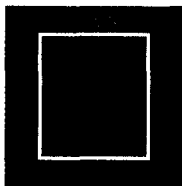
The Emma Chase

BROADWAY, WEST SIDE, A STOREFRONT WINDOW, and painted on the plate glass a cup of steaming coffee; morning, Cottonwood Falls, the Emma Chase Café, November: I'm inside and finishing a fine western omelet and in a moment will take on the planks of homemade wheat bread—just as soon as the shadow from the window coffee cup passes across my little notebook. The men's table (a bold woman sometimes sits at it, but rare is the man who sits at the women's table) has already emptied, and now the other one does too. On the west wall hangs a portrait of a woman from the time of Rutherford B. Hayes, and she, her hair parted centrally, turns a bit to the left, as if to answer someone in the street, her high collar crisp, her eyebrow ever so slightly raised, her lips pursed as if she's about to speak. (And now someone calls out from the kitchen to the new waitress, "On your ticket, what's this U.P.?" and the girl says, "Up," and from the kitchen, "You can't have scrambled eggs up.") The portrait is of "the woman history forgot"—Emma Chase, who said, "You can't start a revolution on an empty stomach." She was not wife, daughter, sister, or mother to Salmon P. Chase, the great enemy of slavery and Lincoln's Chief Justice, whose name the county carries. Emma stands in no man's shadow but in the dark recess that the past mostly is. In this county she's famous for having been forgotten; after all, who remembers that it was on the back of one of Emma's envelopes that Lincoln outlined his Emancipation Proclamation? That's been the story in the Falls, anyway.

Most countians now understand that Emma "A-Cookie-in-Every-Jar" Chase has the reality of an idea and an ideal, even if she had to be invented. When Linda Pretzer Thurston decided to open the café, a couple of years ago, she cast about for a name, something local, something feminine, and she searched the volumes of the *Chase County Historical Sketches* for an embodiment of certain values but came away unsatisfied by or unaware of the facts, such as those of 1889 about Minnie Morgan, of Cottonwood, one of the first women in the country to be elected mayor and *the* first—and probably the only one—to serve with an all-female city council. Minnie has stood in a few dark historical corridors herself: her daughter



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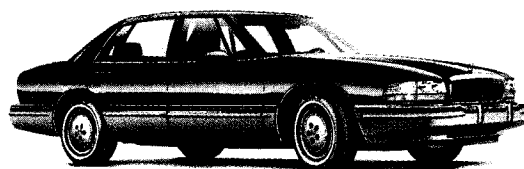


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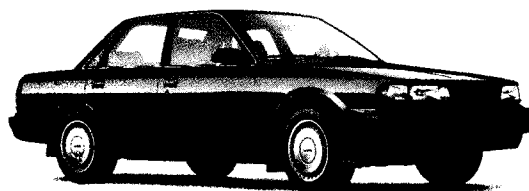
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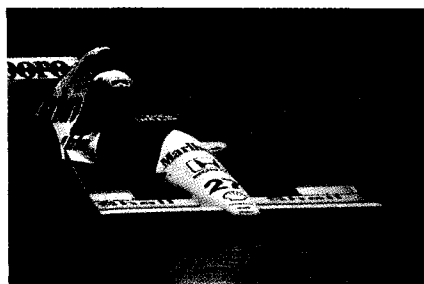


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GOODYEAR

THE BEST TIRES IN THE WORLD HAVE GOODYEAR WRITTEN ALL OVER THEM.

ter's biography of the family in the *Sketches* speaks of wild plums and a neighbor who threw the family's clothes down the cistern to save them from a prairie fire, and it mentions her father's founding of the county newspaper *The Leader* (of many papers, the only one still alive) and her brother's "Jayhawker in Yurup" travel books, but it says not one word about Minnie's mayoralty. There has not been a female mayor since.

So the café had no name until one night, at the family supper table, Linda and her identical twin said simultaneously in response to something she's now forgotten, "The Emma Chase!" Soon newspaper ads for the café printed Emma's chocolate-chip-cookie recipe, and asked townspeople to search their attic trunks for information about her. One day the president of the county historical society, Whitt Laughridge, came in with a large framed portrait of an unidentified woman he'd found in the vault. Thurston cried, "Yes! At last we have Emma!" Unsatisfied with history, she had invented a persona and then had to invent ways to get people to accept the name. Her ads and fabricated history worked so well that *she*, who grew up five miles west, in Elmdale, became to the citizens "Emma down at the café," and she doesn't mind.

There are other things she does object to, such as the racist joke a fellow told a while ago at the men's table, and to which she said loudly from across the room, "Did you hear that one at church, Ray?" and sometimes in answer to sexist comments she'll recite from the café refrigerator, covered with stick-on slogans like a large, upright bumper: THE ROOSTER CROWS BUT THE HEN DELIVERS, or WOMEN'S RIGHTS—REAGAN'S WRONGS.

Linda Thurston is trim and pretty, a dark strawberry blonde given to large, swinging earrings; today she wears a pair of silvery stars almost of a size to be hoisted atop the courthouse cupola for Christmas. She sits down across from me to see what I'm scratching in my notebook. I'm copying what is on her coffee mug:

I HAVE A B.A., M.A., PH.D.
ALL I NEED NOW IS A GOOD J.O.B.

Her doctorate is in child psychology. She is thirty-nine, divorced, and has a son, John. She calls across the little café to the new waitress, "We can't do scrambled eggs over easy."

She pushes the guest book toward me. In it are names from many states and also from Russia, Italy, Israel. She says, "My friends say I'm the white Aunt Jemima of the women's movement, a radicalized storefront feminist whose job is to get cowboys to eat quiche Lorraine even if they call it 'quick lorn.' I'm an aproned militant known for scratch pies, soups, and breads, the one who's taught a waitress Lamaze breathing on a café floor."

A man, his spine crumbling with age, his eyesight almost gone, comes up and holds out a palm of change for his coffee, and Linda takes out thirty-five cents, forget

the tax. Three years ago she and her young son lived near Kansas City, Kansas, where she worked with battered women and handicapped children, some of whose fathers couldn't remember their child's name; they all were poor city people who lived anonymously. She was also the president of a large chapter of the National Organization for Women, and she campaigned and typed and marched. When Ronald Reagan became President and inner-city social programs started disappearing, she found herself depressed and beginning to wonder who the enemy was, where the battlefield was, and she didn't understand why ideas so apparently democratic and humane were so despised, and she was no longer sure what it meant to help anyone disadvantaged or to be a feminist. Women seemed in retreat from action to the easier, safer battles of awareness. Things were retrogressing.

On a trip home to Elmdale she learned that the old and closed Village Inn Café was for sale, and she looked it over, found a broken-down and fouled building. Suddenly a fight against dirt and dilapidation, enemies you could lay your rubber-gloved hands on, looked good, especially when she heard that the county-seat citizens wanted a pleasant place once again to sit down with a coffee and find out whose cattle it was that went through the ice, whose horse had sent him over the fence. A group of Broadway business people met in Bell's western-clothing store and offered to buy the café building and lease it to her—after all, she was a native—and so Linda Thurston decided to live out her fantasy of running a homey little restaurant, and she moved back to Chase County, where, she hoped, "the Hills could heal." Her friend Linda Woody, a state lobbyist for NOW, had also wearied of the struggle against Reaganism, and joined her, and the once dingy, moribund café became unofficially the Retreat for Burned-Out Social Activists, a place where the women could serve homilies, history, and cold pasta salad.

Linda Thurston says: "I saw it as a haven of rest from political struggles, a place I'd have time to write up my research. If we could undermine a few stereotypes along the way and wake up a few people, that was fine too. I've never seen my return as going home so much as going forward to my roots, and I don't think I'll stay long enough to grow old here—unless I already have—and I believe when the time comes to go back to whatever, I'll know where that is. I've learned you can go home again, but I don't know whether you can stay home again."

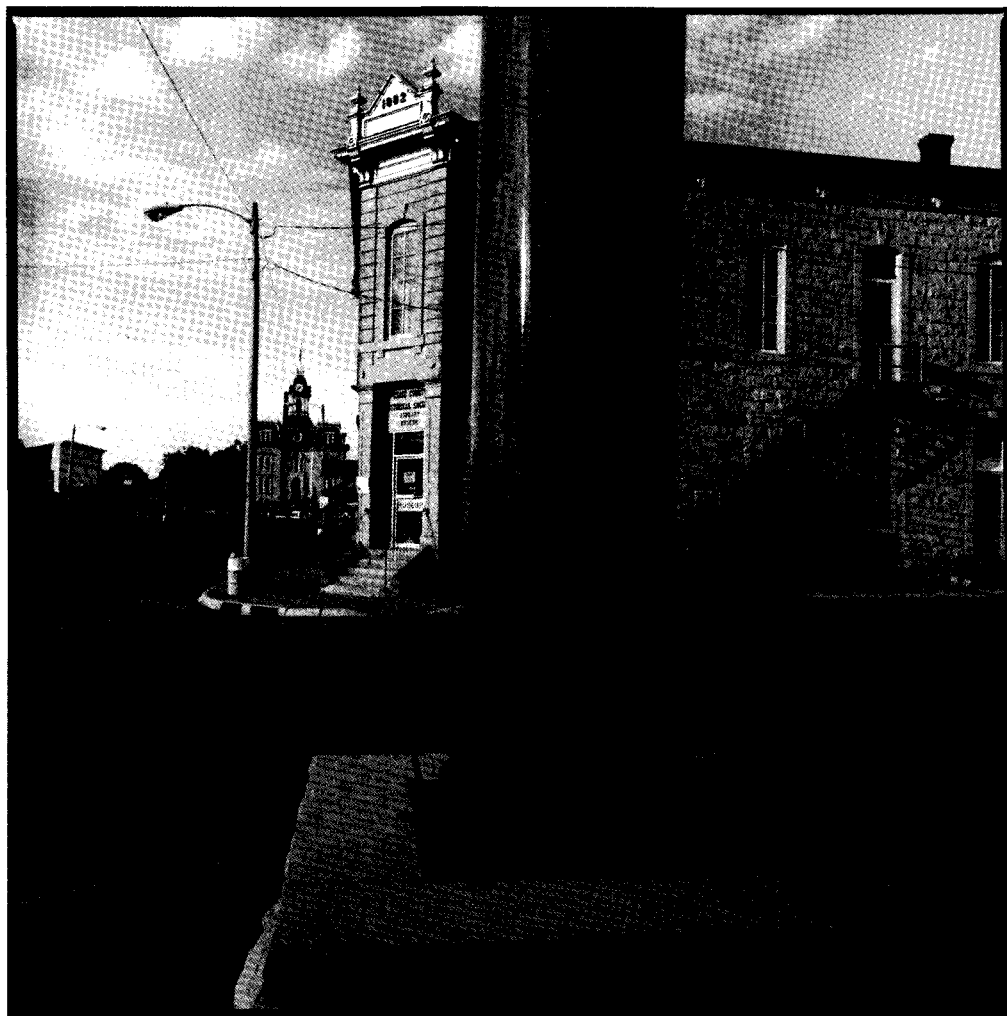
Refurbishing the café became a community task: the seventy-eight-year-old furniture dealer power-sanded the chipped floor, the clothier painted, a dry-waller showed the women how to mud wallboard, and they came to love the exhaustion of such work. Then they got to the Wolf stove, which yielded its encrusted grease to no woman or man or method from scrapers to torches. One day two fellows came in with an idea: they dismantled the range, put it in the back of a pickup, hauled it to the county highway yard, turned a steam hose on it, and reassem-

bled it into the beauty of new sculpture, and someone happily wrote on the blackboard Thurston had set up to list possible names for the place: The Clean Stove Café. Also on the board were The Double L, The Quarthouse, and Soup and Psychological Services, this last already beginning to have some meaning.

The women did not flaunt their politics, and the town was enough impressed with their hard work to ignore their ERA NOW! bumper stickers, and strollers stopped in to watch the work or help out or just pour themselves a cup of free coffee. After six weeks of reconstruction, the women papered over the street windows to create a little suspense for the opening, a couple of days later, while they completed last details. In a county where beef stands second only to Christianity, where gravy and chicken-fried steak are the bases from which all culinary judgments proceed, the women offered eggplant Parmesan, clam linguine, gazpacho, fettuccine Alfredo, and chicken-fried steak. Business was excellent, and the first day they sold out of pasta primavera, and the women were certain they could keep their pledge never to serve french fries or factory white bread. All their eggs came from Chase farms; on weekends, in season, they pre-

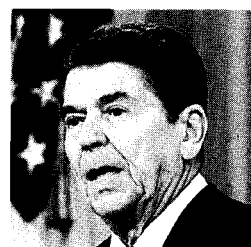
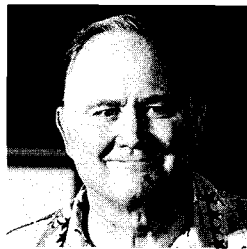
pared calf fries fresh from county pastures (and tolerated jokes attendant to feminists grilling ballocks), and they catered meals to businessmen in lodge meetings and ranch hands at corrals.

Linda says to me: "Scratch cooking all the way. The highest compliment is a woman saying, 'This is as good as I make at home.' But the men bitched all the time about no french fries or white bread, so we gave in and cut our own fry potatoes and baked our own white bread, but still, today, if you want your grilled cheese on Rainbo bread, you'll just have to go someplace else. That's the only thing we haven't compromised on. We've never altered our deeper values, because we refuse to divorce being café owners from our feminism. We're tolerated for it and sometimes we're explained by it: I heard a man ask his friend what a crepe was and why something like that would even be on the menu, and the waitress explained, 'They're for the ERA.' And that's right. We employ only women, and we try to bring to them what we've learned. In the first days of the café a wealthy lady told me there were no battered women in the county, and she believed that, but she's been misled—the problem is just buried. Not long ago, at the health fair in the school gym, we



**Broadway,
Cottonwood Falls**

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BIOGRAPHY
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sponsored a display about services for abused women and children, and we found out later that some people were afraid to stand in front of it because a neighbor might think they were abused. And one day a woman, holding back tears, said to me, 'You ought to get out of here—the longer you stay, the worse you'll feel about yourself as a woman.' Maybe that's a minority view, but it's valid. The other side is that people here are still close to their pioneer ancestors, and they all can tell stories about strong and capable grandmothers. For a long time women have owned businesses in the county, so we're accepted, but then the café isn't a hardware store or a transmission shop."

The young waitress has just given a single check to a man sitting with two women, and Linda explains to her that she should give a check to each person and says, "Don't assume the male always pays," and to me, "Separate checks also protect privacy—people will watch and read something into who picks up the tab," and I ask whether lack of privacy isn't the worst thing about a small town, and she says, "And also the best: I love going to the post office in the morning and knowing everybody. The only time we honk a car horn is with a wave. It's touching when somebody asks about my son or my dad's health. We can't afford not to care about other people in a place this small. Our survival, in a way, depends on minimizing privacy, because the lack of it draws us into each other's lives, and that's a major resource in a little town where there aren't a thousand entertainments. There's an elderly man who lost his little granddaughter to a drunk, a hit-and-run driver, a few months ago. Every time the old fellow comes into the Emma, he retells the story, and every time people listen. What's that worth to a person? Or to a community? A café like this serves to bond us."

I'm scribbling things down, and she watches and says, "Growing up in this county, I learned not to ask questions. If people want you to know something, they'll tell you," and I say that I must be a popular fellow, what with a question mark in every sentence, and she says, "You don't count. You don't live here. Besides, the word is out that you're in the county. You'll be tolerated even if they do think you're about a half bubble off plumb." She watches me write that down, and she says, "We can't afford to ostracize each other just because we don't like this one's politics or the way that one raises her kids. You can get away with it in a city—picking and choosing—but here we're already picked. Participation by everybody discourages change, and the radical gets cut off. But if we give aberrant behavior a wide berth, we don't usually reject it completely. Every merchant on Broadway can tell a story about some petty shoplifter whose pilfering has been ignored to avoid a bigger problem. For an outsider, it's different: if you would espouse something terribly unpopular, like government ownership of land, they'll just question your sanity, but if you pocket a candy bar, they'll have you arrested. If I do either one, it would be just the reverse. We have limits, of course. The first and

most powerful enforcement is gossip and scorn, the sap and sinew of a small town."

When she gets up to ready the kitchen for lunch, I ask whether she or the Emma Chase has ever been scorned, and she says, "You'd be more likely to hear that than I would."

NOW, LATE AFTERNOON, A YEAR LATER: THE PAINTED coffee cup still steams on the window, and stalwart Emma Chase looks over the stacked chairs and onto Broadway, and the dank odor of an old and unused building slips between the locked twin doors. The café has been closed for nearly a year, and there's nothing more than a hope of somebody's reopening it, although everyone is tired of coffee in foam cups and factory cookies in the Senior Citizen's Center, a few doors down. Linda Woody has gone to Washington as a NOW lobbyist, and Linda Thurston is sixty miles up the road, at Kansas State University, an assistant professor in rural special education. The café is for sale, and she's asking \$8,000 less than she paid for it, in spite of its having become known as one of the best small-town eateries in the state, in spite of a Kansas Citian's offer to underwrite the franchising of Emma Chase cafés.

I've just returned from lunch with her in the student union, where she said, "Standing in front of that big Wolf stove, I kept remembering my degree and how useless it was getting with every fried egg. I'm ten years behind my colleagues. I worked hard at the café, and my feet hurt all the time, and I got arthritis in my hands, and finally I realized I didn't want to work that hard day after day and still not earn enough money to send my son to college. Every other business person on Broadway has at least one additional source of income—the furniture dealer runs a funeral parlor, the owners of the two women's dress shops have their husbands' income, the filling-station man has another in Strong City. The Emma Chase would support one frugal person, but it wouldn't even do that without weekend city people. Tourists coming to see the Hills, bicycle clubs—they kept us alive after we earned a name around the state by being special. But there were local folks who never came in, and I'd ask them what it would take to get them inside, and they'd say, 'We let the kids decide where we're going to eat out, and they choose McDonald's.' How does a box of toys in the Emma Chase compete against television commercials? And there's something else: good home cooking is common in the county. Franchise food is the novelty, especially when it's twenty miles away. What our café offered, city people wanted, but they also wanted clean floors, and the cowboys were afraid to come in and get the floor dirty."

I asked, Was it a loss? and she said, "I lost some money and something professionally, because I never found time to write, but I realized my fantasy, and I was at home for the last two years of my father's life. And I got

to live again according to the dictates of rainfall and the price of cattle and grain and the outbreaks of chicken pox. I was part of a community rebuilding its café, and working with those helpers got me to see men again as people instead of the enemy, and it meant something for my son to go to school with children of people I went to school with. And—I think I can say this—because of the Emma Chase, I see my femaleness differently: now I think feminism means being connected with other people, not just with other feminists.”

She was quiet for some time, and then she said, “There were losses, no question, but there was only one real failure—we never did get the farmers to eat alfalfa sprouts. They know silage when they see it. Maybe we should have tried it with gravy.”

Wind

WHEN THE KANSA INDIAN PEOPLE, THE SOUTH Wind people, were pushed out of the state, they carried with them the last perception of the wind as anything other than a faceless force, a force usually for destruction, that power behind the terrible prairie wildfires, the clout in the blizzards and droughts, and, most of all, in the tornadoes that will take up everything, even the fence posts. But people here know the wind well, and they often speak of it; yet, despite the dozen names in other places for local American winds, in this state (whose name may mean “wind people”) it has no identity but a direction, no epithet but a curse. A preacher here once told me, “Giving names to nature is un-Christian.” I said that it might help people connect with things, and who knows where that might lead, and he said, “To idolatry.” Yet the fact remains: the people are more activated by weather than by religion.

Chase County is in the heart of the notorious Tornado Alley of the Middle West, a belt that can average 250 tornadoes a year, more than anywhere else in the world. A hundred and sixty miles from here, Codell, Kansas, got thumped by a tornado every twentieth of May for three successive years, and five months ago a twister “touched down”—mashed down, really—a mile north of Saffordville at Toledo, a small collecting of houses and trailers, and the newspaper caption for a photograph of that crook’d finger of a funnel cloud was “HOLY TOLEDO!” Years earlier a cyclone wrecked a Friends’ meetinghouse there, but this time it skipped over the Methodists’ church and went for their houses. In Chase County I’ve found a nonchalance about natural forces born of fatalism: “If it’s gonna get me, it’ll get me.” In Cottonwood Falls, on a block where a house once sat, the old cave remains, collapsing, yet around it are six house trailers. Riding out a tornado in a mobile home is like stepping into combine blades—trailers become airborne chambers full of flying knives of aluminum and glass. No: if there is a dread in the county, it is not of dark skies but of the op-

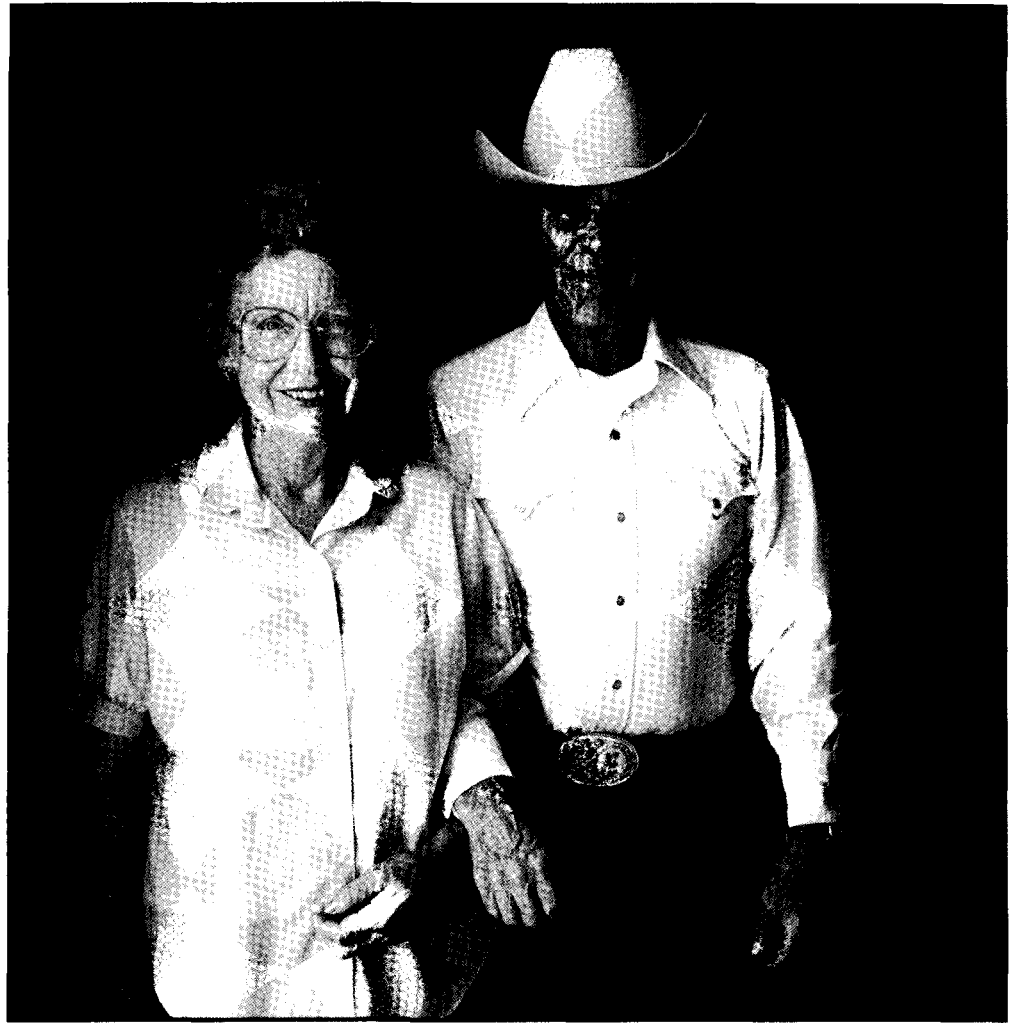
posite, of clear skies, days and days of clear skies, of a drought that nobody escapes, not even the shopkeepers. That any one person in particular will suffer losses from a tornado, however deadly, goes much against the odds, and many residents reach high school before they first see a twister; yet nobody who lives his full span in the county dies without a tornado story.

“*Tornado*”: a Spanish past participle meaning “turned,” from a verb meaning “to turn, alter, transform, repeat,” and “to restore.” Meteorologists speak of the reasons why the midlands of the United States suffer so many tornadoes: a range of high mountains west of a great expanse of sun-heated plains at a much lower altitude, swept by dry and cold northern air that meets warm and moist southern air from a large body of water and combines with a circulation pattern mixing things up—that is to say, the jet stream from Arctic Canada crosses the Rockies to meet a front from the Gulf of Mexico over the Great Plains, in the center of which sits Kansas, where since 1950 people have sighted 1,747 tornadoes. It is a place of such potential celestial violence that the meteorologists at the National Severe Storms Forecast Center, in Kansas City, Missouri, are sometimes called the Keepers of the Gates of Hell. Countians who have smelled the fulminous, cyclonic sky up close, people who have felt the ground shake and heard the earth itself roar and who have taken to a storm cellar that soon filled with loathsome greenish air, find the image apt.

Meteorologists speak of thunderstorms pregnant with tornadoes, storm-breeding clouds more than twice the height of Mount Everest; they speak of funicular envelopes and anvil clouds with pendant mammati and of thermal instability of winds in cyclonic vorticity, of rotatory columns of air torquing at velocities up to 300 miles an hour (although no anemometer has survived the eye of a storm), funnels that can move over the ground at the speed of a strolling man or at the rate of a barrel-assing semi on the turnpike; they say the width of the destruction can be the distance between home plate and deep centerfield and its length the hundred miles between New York City and Philadelphia. A tornado, although more violent than a much-longer-lasting hurricane, has a life measured in minutes, and the meteorologists watch it snuff out as it was born: unnamed.

I know here a grandfather, a man as bald as if a cyclonic wind had taken his scalp—something witnesses claim has happened—who calls twisters “Old Nell,” and he threatens to set crying children outside for her to carry off. People who have seen Old Nell close, up under her skirt, talk about her colors—pastel pink, black, blue, gray—and a survivor said this: “All at once a big hole opened in the sky with a mass of cherry red, a yellow tinge in the center,” and another said, “A funnel with beautiful electric-blue light,” and a third person, “It was glowing like it was illuminated from the inside.” And the witnesses speak of shapes: formless black masses, cones,

**Paul and Leola Evans,
tornado survivors**



cylinders, tubes, ribbons, pendants, dangling lariats, elephant trunks. They tell of ponds being vacuumed dry, eyes of geese sucked out, chickens clean-plucked from beak to bum, water pulled straight up out of toilet bowls, a woman's clothes torn off her, a wife killed after being jerked through a car window, a child carried two miles and set down with only scratches, a Cottonwood Falls woman (fearful of wind) cured of chronic headaches when a twister passed harmlessly within a few feet of her house.

PAUL AND LEOLA EVANS ARE IN THEIR EARLY SEVENTIES but appear a decade younger, their faces shaped by the prairie wind into strong and pleasing lines. They have no children. Paul speaks softly and to the point, and Leola is animated, the kind of woman who can take a small, smoldering story and breathe it into bright flame. Paul listens to her in barely noticeable amusement and from time to time tosses tinder to her.

Leola says: "It was 1949, May. Paul was home from the Pacific. We'd made it through the war, then this. We were living just across the county line, near Americus, on a little farm by the Neosho River. One Friday night I

came upstairs to bed, and Paul gawked at me. He said, 'What are you doing?' I was wearing my good rabbit-fur coat and wedding rings, and I had a handful of wooden matches. It wasn't cold at all. I said I didn't know but that something wasn't right, and he said, 'What's not right?' and I didn't know. We went to bed and just after dark it began to rain, and then the wind came on and blew harder, and we went downstairs and tried to open the door but the air pressure was so strong Paul couldn't even turn the knob. That wind had us locked in. We hunkered in the corner of the living room in just our pajamas—mine were new seersucker—and me in my fur coat. The wind got louder, then the windows blew out, and we realized we were in trouble when the heat stove went around the corner and out a wall that had just come down. We clamped on to each other like ticks, and then we were six feet in the air, and Paul was hanging on to my fur coat—for ballast, he says now—and we went up and out where the wall had been, and then we came down, and then we went up again, longer this time, and then came down in a heap of animals: a cow and one of our dogs with a two-by-four through it. The cow lived, but we lost the dog. We were out in the wheat field, sixty yards from the house,

and Paul had a knot above his eye that made him look like the Two-Headed Wonder Boy. Splintered wood and glass and metal all over, and the electric lines down and sparking, and here we were barefoot. Paul said to walk only when the lightning flashed to see what we were stepping on. We were more afraid of getting electrocuted than cut. We could see in the flashes that the second story was gone except for one room, and we saw the car was an accordion and our big truck was upside down. The old hog was so terrified she got between us and wouldn't leave all the way up to the neighbors'. Their place wasn't touched. They came to the door and saw a scared hog and two things in rags covered with black mud sucked up out of the river and coated with plaster dust and blood, and one of them was growing a second head. The neighbors didn't know who we were until they heard our voices."

Paul says, "That tornado was on a path to miss our house until it hit the Cottonwood and veered back on us. The Indians believed a twister will change course when it crosses a river."

Leola: "The next morning we walked back home—the electric clock was stopped at nine-forty, and I went upstairs to the room that was left, and there on the chest my glasses were just like I left them, but our bedroom was gone, and our mattress, all torn up, was in a tree where we'd have been."

Paul: "We spit plaster for three weeks. It was just plain imbedded in us."

I'm thinking, What truer children of Kansas than those taken aloft by the South Wind?

Last of the Kaw

IN KAY COUNTY, OKLAHOMA, FIFTEEN MILES SOUTH of the Kansas line and twelve northeast of Ponca City, on a hilltop, in the distance the dammed and inundated valley of the Arkansas River turned to a reservoir called Kaw Lake: I am sitting in a maintenance shed with a grandson of a Kansa chief in a broad shaft of sunlight sloping through the open door; it warms us in the cool wind. He is seventy-seven, wears a slender moustache trimmed in the mode of the thirties: it and his wire-frame spectacles and billed cap make him appear less Kansa than he is, but his large, distinctive earlobes reveal the ancestry. From time to time he removes the hat to stroke his palm over his thinning hair; his hands are big, darkened as if oxidized, except for weathered-in networks of white like dried-up saline creeks; the fingernails are thick and broken. For twenty-eight years he was an oil-field pipeline worker, although he once attended business college. In a paper sack is his lunch: a can of Vienna sausage, two slices of white bread, an apple, an orange; during the time we talk, he does not eat, because he forgets about food and the passing hours. His words are soft with a slight rasp at the edges, as if they were old,

frayed cotton, and his pronunciation is that of the southwest hill country. He is six feet tall and big-boned without being burly, has had a little heart trouble, lives several miles away in Newkirk, no phone, drives a Lincoln Continental. His name is Jesse Mehojah, Jr.

A few yards north of the shed stands the old Kaw council house and south of it the dance-ground, a big circle of buffalo grass with a high view of the former reservation, east across the river. Yesterday I came to the dance-ground with Johnnie Ray McCauley, once a pipeline welder, now a recovering alcoholic and the new substance-abuse counselor for the Kaw tribe. Polite and kindly, he too has had heart problems; at fifty-seven, he's the youngest of the half-dozen full-blood Kansa remaining and the only one who still sings and dances, although he does not know any of the old Kaw songs: when the Wind People dance here, they bring in distant relations, the Poncas, to sing and drum. Johnnie has learned two Ponca songs, the Calling Song, which opens a dance and invokes the Great Unknown to join the circle, and the Finishing Song, which closes a dance and asks for blessing. He wants to keep alive the traditions that remain, in part because he now sees them as a shield to help fend off the alcoholism: in singing and dancing he finds strength and self-esteem. Yesterday, Johnnie said to me, "I'd like to sing them for you," and he did, and I listened and watched the strong, uplifted face I'd seen before in the Kansa portraits of George Catlin. The songs were a gift, a moment, at last, to enter the heart of the Ones-of-the-Wind.

Johnnie McCauley is a nephew of Jesse Mehojah, the most recognized of the full-bloods. I've read about Jesse and know something of his history, but he doesn't realize it even when I help with a detail of biography or history that allows him to pull up a string of others, as if I'd put a minnow on his hook so that he could haul in something bigger. Today people pronounce his name *Meh-hoo'-jee*, but he says the correct way is *Mikk'-ho-jay*: you must catch the first syllable in your throat. The name means "Gray Blanket," but he doesn't remember its significance. Among the old Kaws his father was simply Mikkojay, but to accommodate white understanding, he added the first name of Jesse—two syllables. The father was born in the Neosho Valley near Council Grove, Kansas, on the Diminished Reserve; in 1873, when he was just four, he came with his family and 500 other Kaws on a forced migration of 150 miles to Indian Territory, a foot journey of seventeen days. Jesse can't remember his father ever talking about the walk or the time in Kansas, but he was at the old reservation once, in 1925, when he was twelve, to see the Monument to the Unknown dedicated. Those memories are now dim.

In the Smithsonian Institution archives is a cracked glass-plate photograph of a traditional Kaw bark-house, a remarkable structure the people learned to build generations ago, even before the departure from the Ohio River

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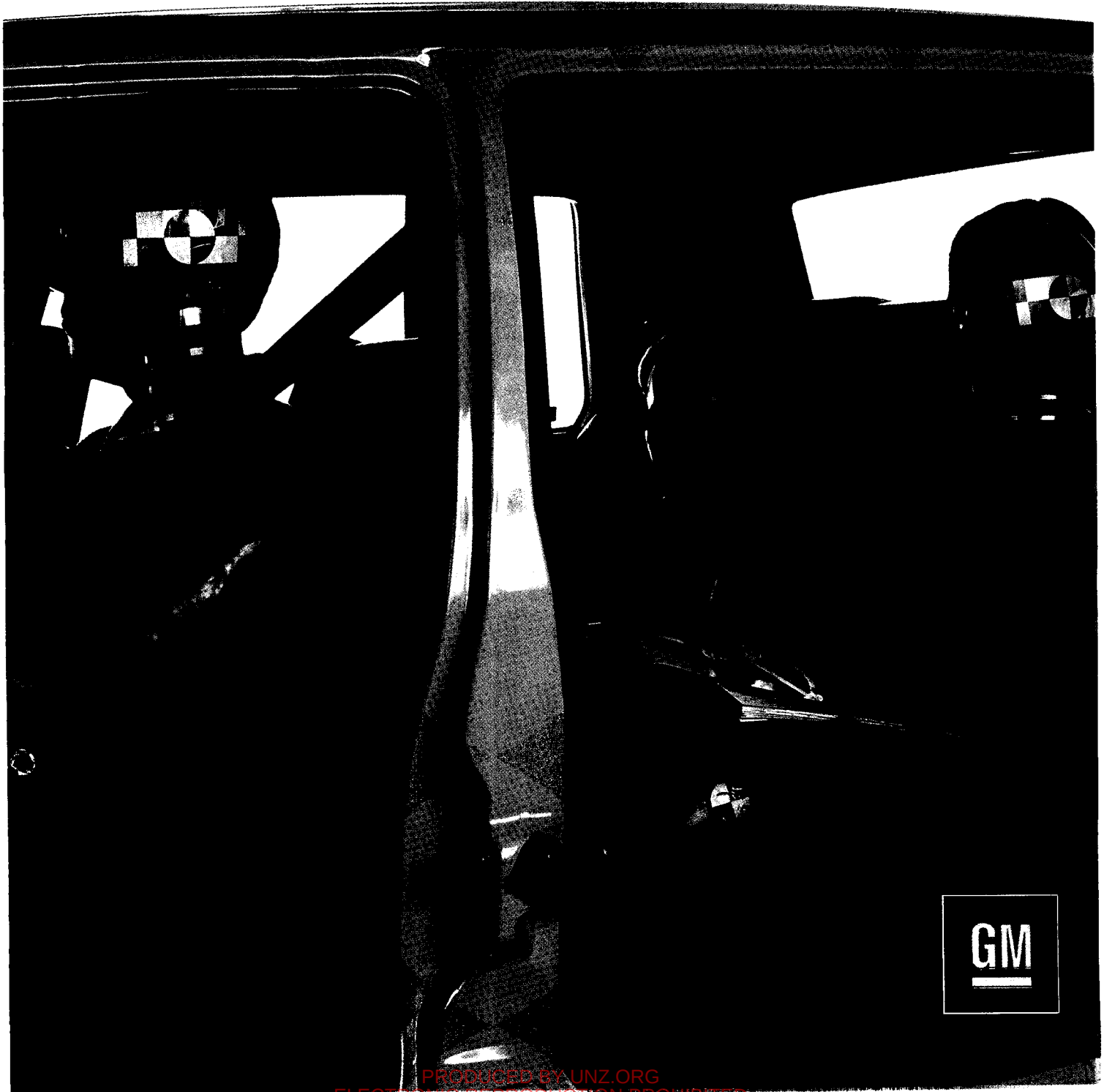
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It's padded, energy-absorbing interior surfaces.

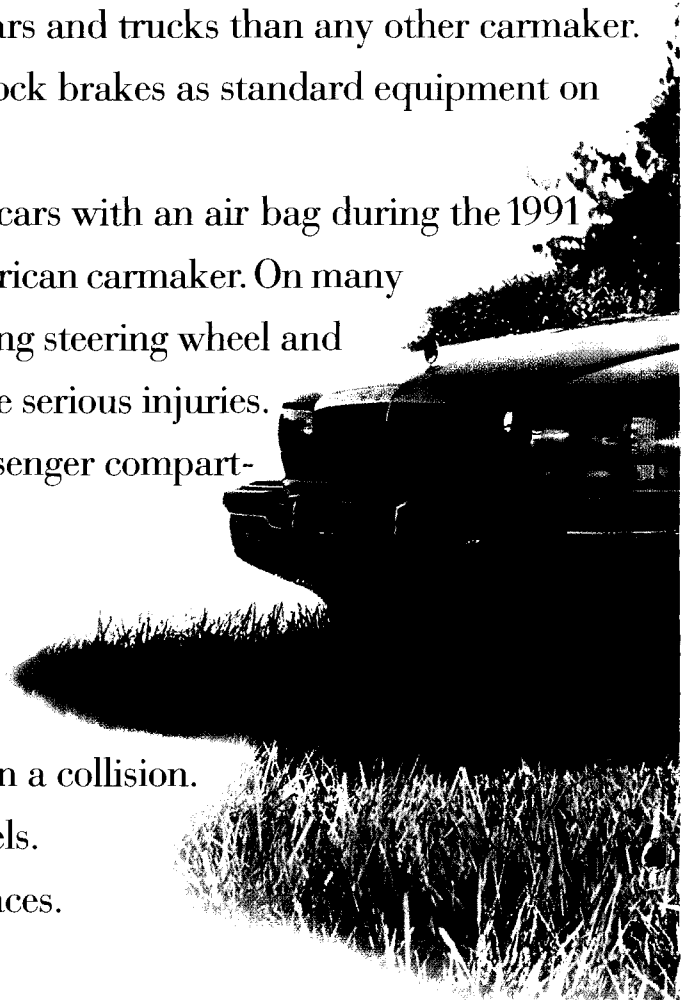
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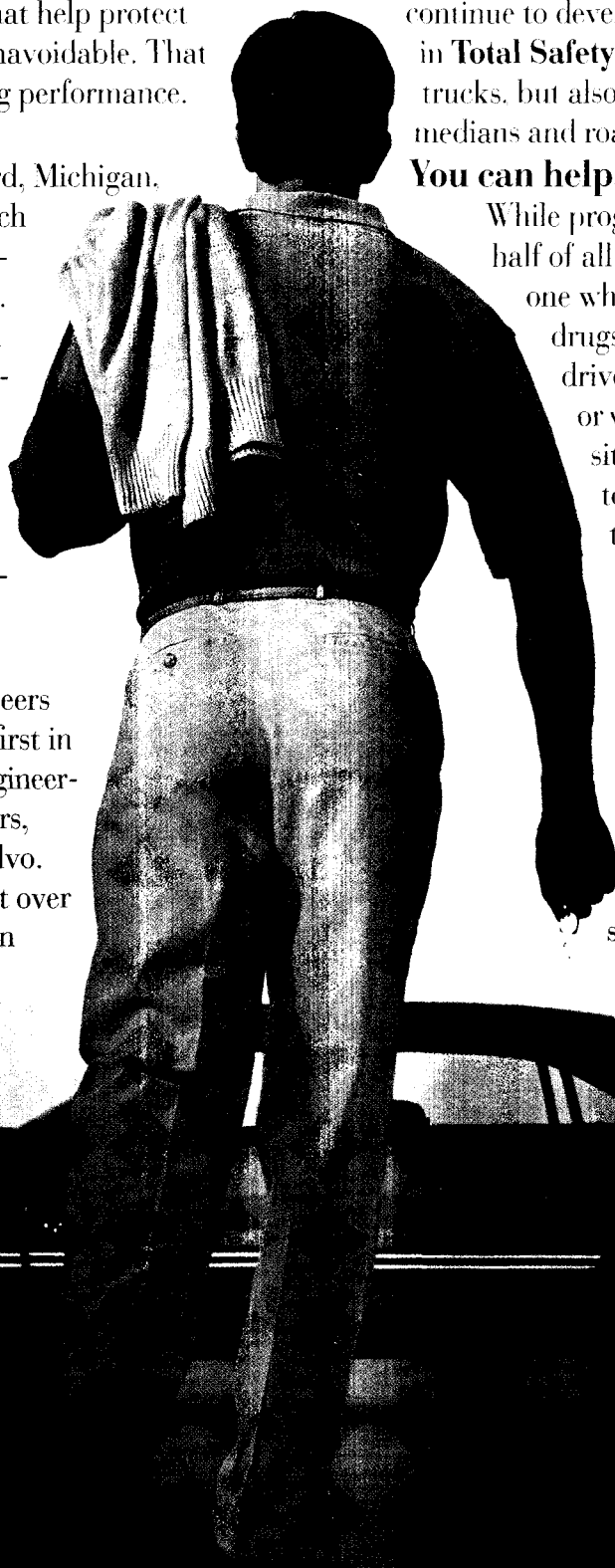
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TOTAL SAFETY



SYSTEMS.



PUTTING QUALITY
ON THE ROAD

Valley: the house is large and circular, its five-foot-high walls surmounted by a somewhat flattened conical roof. In the picture, on each side of the single doorway stand a man and a woman, Nopahwiah and Pakkahshutsa, Jesse's grandparents, and in this house, built near the Arkansas River soon after the exodus from Kansas, his mother was born. Nopahwiah, a descendant of White Plume, was the chief of the *Kahola Band*, the group that lived along the northern edge of Chase County; this branch of the tribe held out longest against the cultural erosion that worked apace once the Kaw reached Indian Territory and settled on the east bank of the Arkansas River where it enters Oklahoma. Jesse considers Nopahwiah the last "blood," or hereditary, chief of the tribe.

Mehojah is the next youngest of seven children; when he was born, in 1913, his parents lived in a two-story frame house on reservation land his father farmed. Actually, the reserve by then no longer existed, the allotment of 1902 having taken the land from the tribe and parceled it out to individual Kaws, the best acreage going mostly to the growing number of mixed-bloods. His parents attended regular church services, worked their land, and looked to the future of their children: they had become Thomas Jefferson's Christian farmers.

One day when Jesse and his younger brother and parents were in their buggy, on the way to the nearby white settlement of Kaw City, his father suffered a paralytic stroke. He lived on for some years, but the family had to move into Washungah, the reservation village laid out in 1902 as part of the allotment. Washungah was a mile upstream and across the river, on the east side, from the white town. When the Army Corps of Engineers flooded the bottomland, in the early 1970s, Kaw City moved up onto the bluff; its population is now about 300. As for Washungah, only the council house and some graves made it out. When Kaws today talk of cultural erosion, it has an additional, literal meaning.

Jesse is speaking: "We always ate well when I was a boy. Dad and Mama knew how to preserve food, can it up. Dad would butcher an animal, and the womenfolks went out and sliced the beef into long slivers and put it over a fire and cooked it. Then they hung it up on lines to cure. We call it jerky now. It was real good eating. Mama would make up hominy and boil it with the jerky, maybe add some potatoes or beans. We were efficient in preserving food. We hunted for the table—rabbits, squirrels, coons. In the summer the river would get low and we could walk along with a pitchfork and gig channel catfish, and up on Beaver Creek we'd catch mudcats and flatheads and perch. We used to take water from the creeks and springs in big stoneware pitchers, and pass them around the table, and each of us would honor Wakonda by drinking from the sacred water. It was pure then."

As he talks, he turns his thumbs slowly. Through the open door the wind carries a peculiar wavering voice, as if from some creature dying, and when I ask what bird

makes that strange, pitiful song, he says, "Isn't a bird—it's wind hung up in the fence wire."

He says, "Mama and Dad spoke English but not very good. She never did teach us two younger boys to speak Indian, although my older brothers and sisters spoke it. Mama wasn't ashamed—she was just looking at what was ahead of us, thinking of our welfare. She wanted us to learn office work and how to speak correct English, but Mama and Dad spoke Indian at home, prayed in Indian, but I and my little brother talked to them in English. I understood Indian—and I still do. When I hear Osages talking, I know what they're saying, but I can't join in. I remember hello: *hoo-way*." He sits quietly, thinking. "I can't seem to remember other words now. A person lets things get away from him. Sometimes I wish I'd gone ahead and learned it. My older brothers used to speak it in the oil fields when we were all pipeliners."

Again he reckons, then: "As far as I know, only old Elmer Clark can still speak Kaw. He's a half-breed, grew up around the Osage over east here. They speak slower than the Kaw. But the last full-bloods, none of us can speak it."

He turns his thumbs, listens to the wind in the fence. "Now, 'Kansas': that's not the proper pronunciation—it's *Kohn'-zay*. My parents always called themselves Kohnzay. I don't know where this 'Kaw' come in, but that's what we are today, officially, the Kaw Tribe of Oklahoma."

Were it not for Jesse Mehojah, there would probably not be a Kaw Tribe of any kind today. When, in 1902, the federal government, encouraged by Vice President Charles Curtis and other Kaw mixed-bloods, forced allotment onto the people, the tribe ceased to exist as a legal entity and most of the Kaw records went off to the Oklahoma Historical Society, as if they were old papers from some family come to the end of its line. Eighth-blood Curtis, once a real-estate developer (and, like Jesse, a descendant of White Plume), never lived in Indian Territory, although he saw to it that he and his sixteenth-blood children got nice parcels of tribal land at the expense of poor full-bloods.

"After 1902 our land went like wildfire—to whites—and we ended up with nothing. The Osages, next to us, sold off a lot of their land but they kept the mineral rights, and that's how they became such a wealthy tribe. But we let it all get away. If I'd been chieftain then, I would've never approved of allotment, because you're depriving your people. If you're a chief, then you don't think singularly. That's just born in my system."

When Jesse graduated from Kaw City High School, in the 1930s, and went off to the oil fields, his town of Washungah, its streets named after mixed-bloods, still had a mission school, an agency building, a council house, and a round house, where he danced in traditional costume. In the late sixties, when he began losing feeling in his fingers, Jesse discovered that he suffered from pernicious anemia (an irony for a red man who was about to become

embroiled in issues of blood quantum), and he retired from pipeline labor and returned to home ground to find tribal buildings falling apart or gone and his people broken into factions, generally along blood-quantum lines; the ruinous tension between full- and mixed-bloods left the full Kaws dispirited and struggling to hold to old ways and communal values, while the people of lesser blood pursued aggressive and successful individualism. The problems of the Neosho Valley had not simply reappeared—they had at last overwhelmed the tribe. The great American melting pot was bubbling hard, and mixed-bloods so controlled things that full-bloods were no longer represented in what little remained of tribal organization. The rape of the Kaw realm, after almost two centuries of facing Caucasians, was nearly complete.

That's when ancestral ghosts began stirring things and awakening the living. With water backing up behind the dam a few miles downriver, the Corps of Engineers started moving graves in the old cemetery at Washungah to high ground twelve miles away: the removal and the careless methods of doing it angered the seventeen remaining full-bloods.

Two other things also roused them: the last intact historic Kaw structure was about to go under, and, even though its bylaws specified that council members had to be at least one-quarter Kaw, the tribe was under the control of a sixteenth-blood who, full-bloods believed, was doing little for the people, instead pursuing a claim against the government for damages resulting from an 1825 treaty, money that could be collected not by the tribe but only by individuals. Jesse and a few others orga-

nized the Kaw Protective Association to watch over the interests of "the Indians," those who fit one federal definition of that time of a Native American—a blood quantum of 25 percent or more. The awakened tribe persuaded the corps to turn over a few acres of surplus land on the west side of the river and move there, block by block, the stone council house and rebuild it. With that evident symbol and the support of the full-bloods, the new group in 1973, exactly one century after the last removal, brought suit in federal court against "the breed people," or mixed-bloods, for the right to direct the tribe. The court decided in favor of the plaintiffs; led by the full-bloods, a new tribal council appeared with Jesse as chairman. Even though the Kaw once again had legally qualified and energetic native leaders who put tribal welfare first, their assets consisted of only the cemetery and the small council house: their original 100,137 acres of Indian Territory were gone.

They set up an office and sent representatives to Washington, where they discovered \$17,000 of Kaw money, a sum intended for tribal operations. With this as a base, they went after grants to build low-income housing at Newkirk, a few miles west of the old reservation. Establishing health-care facilities and providing employment for Kaws were more difficult steps, until the opening of a bingo hall at Newkirk. Now, among their several enterprises and 1,100 new acres (none of it on the original reserve), the hall is their largest source of income. Except for the spiritual aspects, what the bison once was to the Kansa, bingo is today.

"We didn't know anything about tribal government or laws or investments, but we said we were going to learn—learn good—and we dedicated ourselves. People told us, 'I didn't know there was any Kaws left.'"

Today, in the contemporary tribal office at Kaw City, the enrollment ledger shows 1,550 members, a population coincidentally close to the historical number of Kansa before the ravages of the earlier reservation years in Kansas. It appears that Jesse, the next to last full-blood ever to lead the tribe (his younger brother served as chairman a few years afterward), has helped his people restore themselves, a success foretold in his Kaw first name, Hohm-beh-scah, Coming Morning, an image that seems to extend Gray Blanket. He and the new council made significant progress—landmark achievements, in some ways, for Native Americans—so much so that it seems fair to raise the question implicit in the growing tribal roll: What is a Kaw? Jean-Paul Sartre said that a Jew is one so considered by others; at least to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, that is also a Kaw. The survival of the Wind People at last looks secure.

But what survives? Six full-bloods (all males and only one under seventy), five three-quarter-bloods, seventy-three half-bloods, about two hundred quarter-bloods, and a few others with odd quantum above 25 percent: that is to say, four fifths of the tribe are less than one-quarter Kaw. Some members who come into the office to

WITHIN THIS TREE

Within this tree
another tree
inhabits the same body;
within this stone
another stone rests,
its many shades of grey
the same,
its identical
surface and weight.
And within my body,
another body,
whose history, waiting,
sings; *there is no other body,*
it sings,
there is no other world.

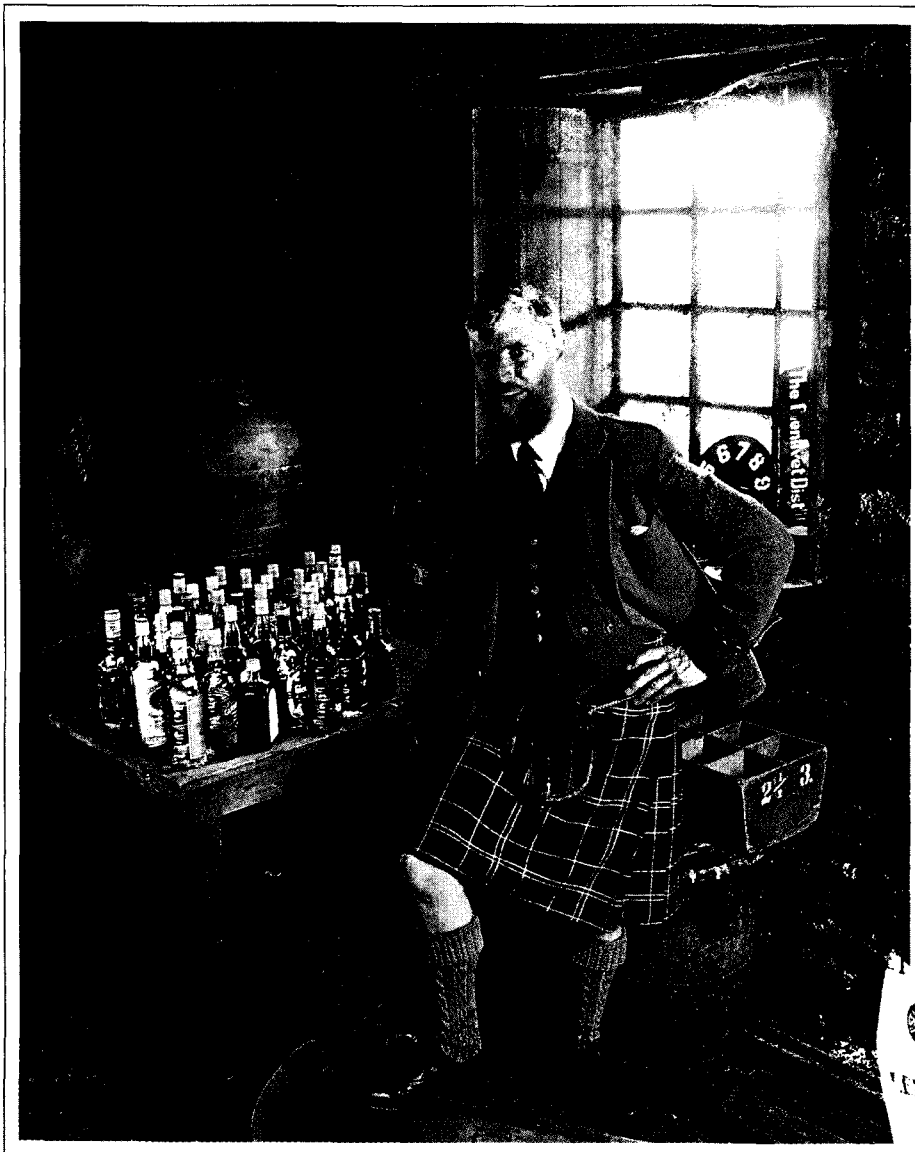
—Jane Hirshfield



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in their names.*

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*—Sandy Milne,
our Resident Sage.*



Sandy Milne bemused by all the "Glens."

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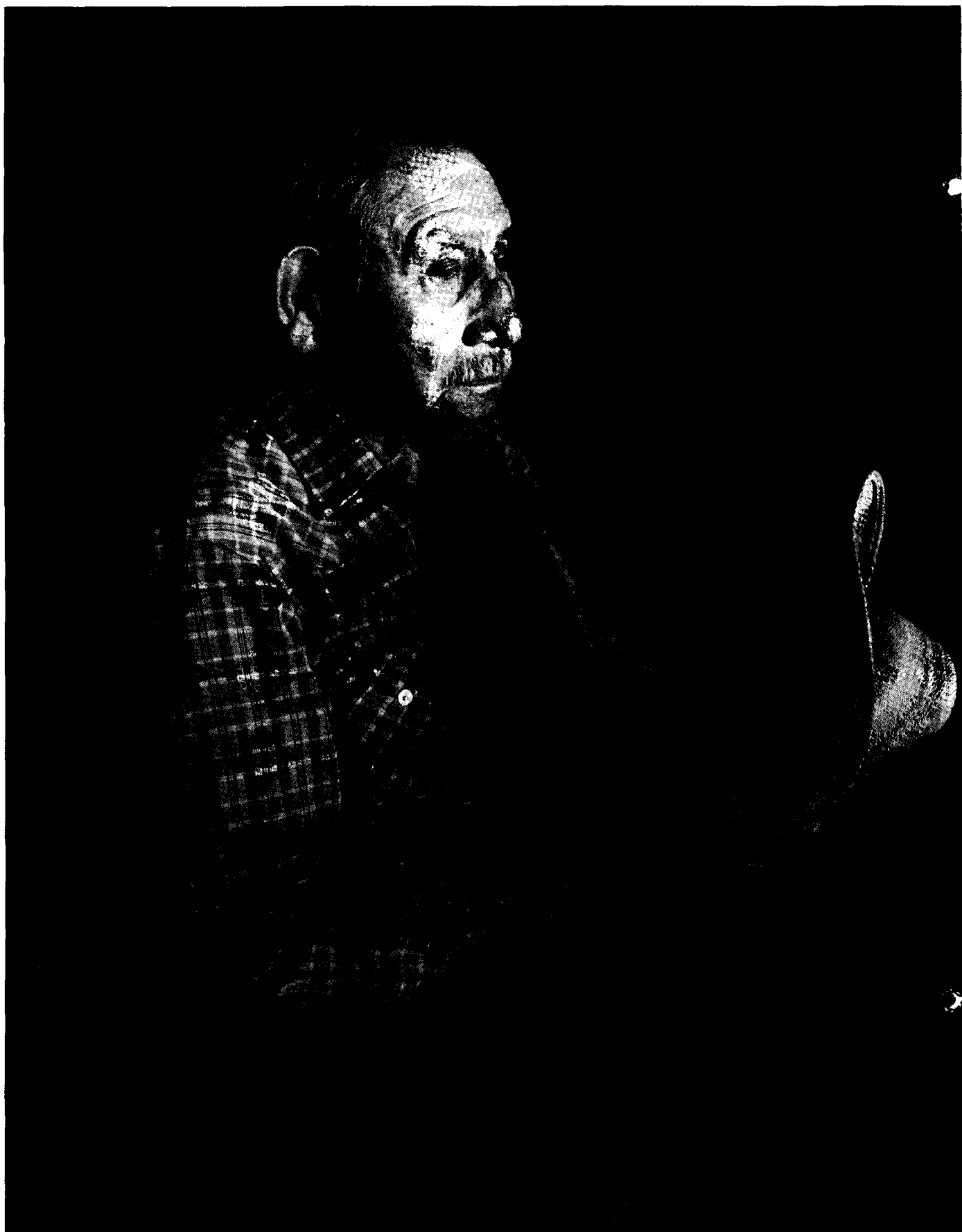
—What is a single malt Scotch?—

A single malt is Scotch the way it was originally: one single whisky, from one single distillery. Not, like most Scotch today, a blend of many whiskies. The Glenlivet single malt Scotch whisky should therefore be compared to a château-bottled wine. Blended Scotch is more like a mixture of wines from different vineyards.

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*How
many of these
no-bloods could tell
you who White
Plume was, or could
distinguish
a Kaw dog dance
from a Cheyenne
sun dance?
How many could
give you even so much
as a hoo-way?*



Jesse Mehojah, Jr.,
full-blooded Kaw

conduct business are blue-eyed blonds; others have quantum as low as 1/128. According to a full Kaw, "Stick a needle in their finger and that drop of blood you'll squeeze out is all the Kaw they got."

To appear on the roll a person need only prove descent from a 1902 allottee: a single Kansa ancestor qualifies you, provided you are not also on some other tribal roll. A half Kaw and half Osage, say, must decide where to put his allegiance. For years the roll was so loosely maintained that people went to it and simply added their names. Now, without the benefits that Jesse and other councilmen and chairpersons (the current one is a woman, only the second) helped establish, just how many of these members would bother to maintain their enrollment no one knows, although recently it has been more difficult to get a good turnout for the annual meeting. Worse, how many of these no-bloods (as quarter-and-aboves sometimes call them) could tell you who White Plume was, or what happened up at Council Grove, or could distinguish a Kaw dog dance from a Cheyenne sun dance? How many could give you even so much as a *hoo-way*?

Although a person must still be at least one-quarter Kaw to serve on the council, the time is coming when that proscription will have to change. Jesse says, "In fifty years there won't be much Kaw Indian left—there won't be much blood at all. The decision's made, and we all helped make it: I married a white woman. My children are half-breeds—but if you don't want to get on the wrong side of them, don't call them white."

A man walks into the maintenance shed and listens. Jesse says he is his second cousin, Joe Mehojah. "Joe's a half-breed. He was tribal chairman after me, my right-hand man, but he works in maintenance now. He's my boss."

Joe Mehojah is sixty-three, burly, squarely built, his baldness giving him the look of a Kansa warrior or a Marine grunt, both of which he has been: twenty-two years in the corps and, later, several weeks at Wounded Knee when the last federal attack occurred there. Along with Jesse, he also happened to be on Kaw business in the BIA building in Washington when Indians took it over in 1972; both of them stayed for the seven days of the occupation, until the bureau agreed to talk with the people whose welfare it supposedly oversees. A graduate of Haskell Institute, then the Indian high school in Lawrence, Kansas, Joe spent most of his early years with Native Americans of several tribes. "When I was younger, my mother and I would go into a café and people would stare. They were wondering what that Indian was doing with a good-looking white woman. She used to tell me, 'You're half white, but you should take up for the Indian people.' My grandmother used to tell me, 'Marry an Indian, marry an Indian.' And I did—a full-blood Oneida from Wisconsin. And I told my kids, 'Marry an Indian,' and they did. Their children married Indians, so my grandchildren are seven-eighths Native American, but

only an eighth Kaw. In fifty years quarter-blood Kaws will be like full-bloods today. It'll be a tribe of no-bloods."

Joe laughs before he says this: "Me, I know I'm a half-breed, but for years I blamed my father because a pretty white woman looked at him and he fell in love and married her, and then I was brought into the world. She's my mother—whatever else she is, that's what I want her to be—but I'm an Indian and I show it."

Looking at the first two chairmen of the reorganized tribe, men who four hours ago were picking up debris, I ask why they are working out of a maintenance shed rather than in the tribal office: a silence, shuffled sentences, silence, a few words spoken for my ears only, silence. Some topics a stranger doesn't engage in without harming others. Jesse says, "If I had one wish granted for my tribe, it would be for unity, harmony, prosperity. In harmony you can prosper. Today the almighty dollar gets in the way. For some people, it's a good investment to build a chemical-waste dump on our new land, but people who've lived here and remember this land, the changes bother them because they see it turning ugly. We get so far apart, and that hurts me."

(Later a senior Kaw explains this much: "Tribal politics can be bad. Too much treachery. It used to be we spoke out directly, but not now. And younger ones don't go to the older members for advice. I even heard one kid say, 'I wish you'd tell those elderly people to stay out of our Kaw business.' He was talking about the blood Indians who rebuilt this tribe.")

I ask, While we're on politics, why not get into religion, too? Both men are Latter-Day Saints. Before he goes back to cleaning, Joe recites the notion about Native Americans descending from the Lamanites, an ancient tribe of Israel that (according to the *Book of Mormon*) migrated to the Western Hemisphere. The widely held idea that Asian peoples crossed over the Bering land bridge he believes to be fiction. Jesse seems less sure, but he says, "About the Lamanites—that all's been brought down to me. I've been told that these lost tribes have been recorded. If it's documented, that's the way it is. But, even though we're Lamanites, I still feel we're Native Americans. I believe that every inch of ground you step on is Indian country."

I ask Jesse whether he would do anything differently if he could go back to the year he graduated from high school, and he says, "Like what?" and I ask whether he might marry a Kaw woman.

He doesn't like the question: "You're asking me to forsake some fifty years of love." He falls silent. Then, "To be rational, in these times you can see it would have been better for the tribe for me to have married into my own people—but who? Where was the woman for me? I was related to them all."

Silence again, but for the wind. Jesse says, "If I could go back with the voice of a chieftain, I'd advise my people to be more clannish rather than intermarrying. We all

branched out and depleted our numbers—that's the sad part of the whole thing."

I say the Missouria tribe is down to a pair of full-bloods, a brother and sister in their nineties, and then I ask, Is it sad watching and waiting for the last Kaw? Jesse shakes his head. "What else? What else? We were a proud tribe. To be the last—I don't even want to think about it. If I'm the one, I'll be a lonely Indian. When your people are gone, what have you got? A void."

Coming Morning turns his thumbs, the sun shaft gone, the air colder, the voice of the wind hung up in the barbed wire.

One Last Question

THE PINK POLISH ON THE SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD girl's fingernails is chipped, and dried blood is caked around the cuticles: she grasps the scrotum gently and pulls it taut and with a scalpel cuts off the tufted base and throws it down, and reaches deep into the sac to find the testicular cords, jerks them loose, and drops the testes into the clouded water of a gallon jar holding another three dozen. The whole operation is nearly bloodless. Cheryl will cut calves, but she refuses to brand them—that she leaves to the others. In my nostrils is the smell of burnt Hereford hair, an odor that takes getting accustomed to; white smoke from the electric branding iron swirls up for a few moments and then blows clear; on the little bull's haunch is a flying J, the raw skin shining brown like new harness leather. Linda leans and thrusts an inch-long hypodermic needle into the haunch. Through all of this the four-month-old bull has lain silent, but when Arlene puts the electric iron to its skull to burn off the buttons that would grow into horns, and smoke swirls again, the animal bawls keenly. Then it's all over, and the calf table—a hinged chute that clamps and lays out the Hereford—swings back upright and opens, and the little fellow shoots across the corral and looks around in confusion, and somebody calls out in falsetto, "Welcome to steerdom!" The five women move the next animal toward the calf table, but this one is recalcitrant, and Jane says, "Come on, sugar," and it takes a step or two and then throws its heavy little skull against Cheryl's head, and she drops to the dust, and it's a few minutes before she can continue. When she does, there is no vengeance in her work; throughout the hot June morning none of the all-woman crew has cursed or kicked the animals. If you've ever watched men castrating, branding, dehorning, and inoculating cattle, you know it just isn't done this way.

Jane Beedle Koger owns these calves and the land they graze on; she is thirty-five, dark blonde, about a thumb's length taller than five feet, and she often does things the way they aren't done. Consider her corral attire: a pink pith helmet, high-top pink sneakers, an emblazoned T-shirt: WE'RE OUT TO WIN OUR SPURS. Earlier she said



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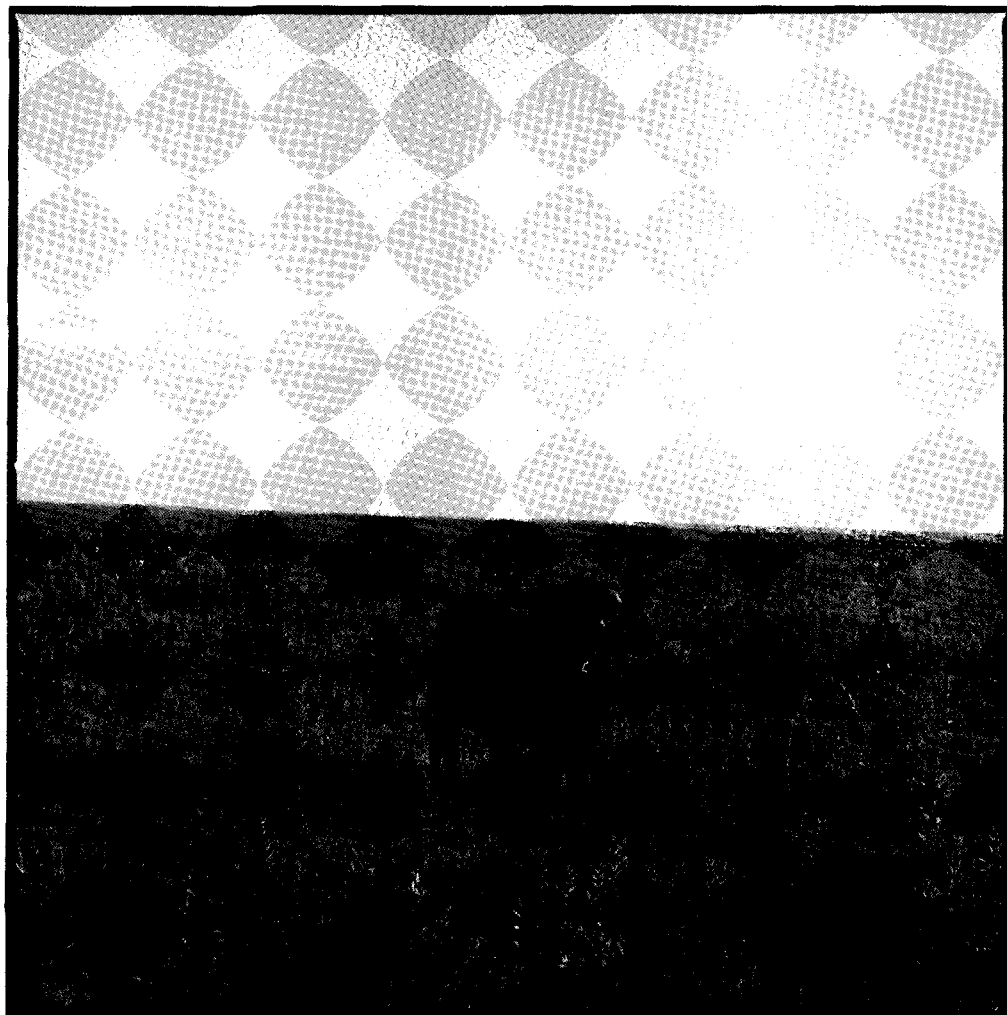
seriously to me, "My views aren't always in tune in here, so I keep them turned down." Although she usually hires only women to work cattle, she does employ one man to help with her 200 acres of feeder crops; but now that the last little bull has been cut, I'm the only intact male in six miles, and one of the women has just flashed the knife toward where I sit watching above the calf table and said, "Next?" and another says, "Forget it—he's a canner," meaning an animal too old to bring a good price, the kind Koger believes goes into most franchise burgers, and someone says, "Couldn't even get a Little Mac out of him."

Jane Koger has awakened her employees to feminism as Linda Thurston helped awaken hers, and this morning she said, "Agricultural knowledge doesn't pass on a Y chromosome—it's learned behavior, and if a cowboy can learn to work cattle, *anybody* can. I mean, his idea is, 'If it don't fit, get a goddamn hammer.' When a woman is around animals, her nurturing instinct comes out." Jane knows that any cowboy who didn't scorn such talk would be ridiculed, and she knows that in spite of her early success, men here still say an all-woman operation can't last long; her response is to quote native son William Allen

White: "My advice to the women's clubs of America is to raise more hell and fewer dahlias." She raises only a little of the one and none of the other, but she does raise 300 crossbred Herefords. She can see no reason for rodeos, which only perpetuate adolescent-male myths about cowboys and encourage a moronic masculine desire for dominance over dumb animals: "Some of these guys are so bright they can't even see when they're running a pasture calf to death."

When the cattle are again on the grass, we climb into her Jeep, and she hands me the jar of ballocks, which roll sluggishly in the thick water as we bounce back to the ranch, where she will clean the little creamy ovoids, heavily veined with purple and looking like nothing so much as nighthawk eggs, and dole them out to her friends like Godiva chocolates. As for herself, she's never eaten one.

I've known Jane for a year or so, occasionally seeing her along the desolate roads near her pastures in the southeast part of the county, but it was only a couple of weeks ago that I went to her house in Bazaar, after I heard her crew was going to cut and brand. That evening we stood and talked on her back porch, and she said abruptly, "Do you eat red meat?" and I thought she was set-



Near Homestead Ranch,
southeastern Chase County

ting me up, as she likes to do, and I said, If it's brown, and she said, "I just got some steaks today." We went inside and she began fixing two mail-order strips. Jane doesn't eat her own animals; about that she said, "Inconsistency is just great," and she put the cuts on the grill and said, "I grew up eating beef twice a day. Now maybe it's once a week." Jane Koger's 6,000-acre Homestead Ranch, a third of which she leases for transient grazing, goes mostly to her year-round cow and calf operation, where she allows eight acres to each animal, twice the transient ratio.

She grew up in Cottonwood Falls. Her father, Evan, a Yale graduate in English literature, is an heir to one of the big ranching operations in the state, a place partly composed of land an ancestor bought from the New York Rockefellers. On that ranch, in the Gypsum Hills of southwest Kansas, Jane and her sisters used to spend summers working cattle. Her mother is a native countian and a descendant of an old ranching family. When Jane went off to the first of several colleges, she vowed never to return to Kansas; she studied some religion but never graduated, although she did earn her pilot's license. At a tiny Nazarene college in Idaho she realized that the Flint Hills still held her, even after eight years, and a novel gave her the final urging: "Evan challenged me to read *Atlas Shrugged*, so I did, and Dagny Taggart became my mentor. I thought if she could run a railroad and succeed while playing by men's rules, I could operate some outfit. She woke up in me the importance of ethics in business and the dangers of compromise. So I came home to run my railroad, which turned out to be a ranch, and I've been motivated—like Dagny—by anger at people saying 'You can't.'"

Evan Koger saw several reasons for not buying Chase pastureland at more than the fifty dollars an acre he had last paid, years earlier, and he refused to help Jane buy back land once in her mother's family. She said to me, "I figured it was better to buy it and lose it than never to try. Evan antagonized me to success. He'd say, 'Jane, you just can't do it—there are things you can't do.' But I knew that because we're not as strong as men, we don't have to be as dumb, so instead of muscle we use a come-along to pull a calf from the uterus, or we get a front-end loader to move a chute. Gears and ratchets and hydraulics are great equalizers. The upshot of all this was that with my sister Kay, I committed at twenty-five to a quarter-of-a-million-dollar debt to the Federal Land Bank. Evan gave me some seed stock. Later I bought out Kay's interest—she and her husband run a ranch up at Hymer. After my grandmother died, I bought her home, this house, and remodeled it a little, and now I've reassembled a lot of family land. When I'd proved a few things—had succeeded almost in spite of Evan—then he contributed some more land. I've taken a ranchers' short course at Kansas State—my family calls it a short rancher's course—and I've attended a stockmen's school in Texas,

and I read. Still, people here think I've had it all handed to me. They say Evan Koger was born with a silver spoon in his mouth but his kids have left him with a plastic fork."

She set out the steaks and rice and broccoli, and I said that I'd heard she had one of the biggest ranches in Chase among those who run their own cattle, and she said, somewhat absently, "I suppose," and then, "People here sit around and compare how poor they are, see who's the worst off. I mean, being successful in this county is suicide. Nobody wants you to succeed. People get together and tear you down, and that used to bother me until I realized it wasn't just me they tore down—I saw that if they could chew me up and spit me out as a potential failure or whatever, they wouldn't even pause before going on to the next person. They'll get around to you, too. I just don't understand it: they talk about economic development here, and at the same time they don't want anybody to achieve anything."

I said someone had told me that in spite of all the low-income families here there were a dozen countians worth more than a million dollars out of a population of only about 3,000, and she nodded and said, "But this is still a great county for not taking risks and not having a good time. Before my parents moved away, they belonged to the Over Forty Club, and all they did was have good times. There's nothing like that around now. A lot of people don't know what they have, because they've always lived here, and it's the only world they know, so it looks typical and ordinary. That's sad."

(Later she would say, "Last year a colt was born in the early morning, and I was there with it. That afternoon I was in New York on Broadway, buying a ticket for *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe*, Lily Tomlin's one-woman show. I was standing in line with trash blowing around, bag ladies limping by, everything shoulder to shoulder, and I was thinking of that wet colt in Chase County, Kansas, and I felt I knew how different this place is and what it's worth. I love New York, and one of the reasons I love it is that it shows me what I have in this county.")

To the end of helping city people explore the tallgrass country and understand where their Whoppers and tenderloins come from, for several weeks each year Jane opens the Homestead to a few women; for sixty dollars a day, a visitor can eat and sleep in the old south ranch house on Thurman Creek and loaf about the prairie, or she can join the crew and help work cattle, even down to castration. Jane said, "I like people, but I live where there aren't many, and I want to share some of this prairie—a few people at a time. But to get outsiders to see the beauty, they have to slow down and stay for a while. This place comes to you slowly—or maybe we come slowly to it. I want women to see the reality of my operation, and if they're not afraid, they can watch a pregnancy check or watch the electro-ejaculator go up the bull's

rectum, and they can help measure testicles to determine if he's fit to service my cows. People should understand at this basic level what has to happen to put a burger in their mouths. The women who come in here are great—they ask all the questions you hope nobody will ever ask, like 'How do you make silage?' They don't mean how do you cut and pack it—they want to know how caramelization works. They want to know about chemical enhancements in my beef, and I tell them I use antibiotics only by injection—they're necessary to inoculate against blackleg, pinkeye, and influenza, and I put antibiotics into feed only during the three weeks' stress of weaning. Hormones I don't use at all. I tell these women they should get on the cattle industry, because too much shit goes into beef—not nearly as much, of course, as goes into hogs. If it was feasible now, I'd raise only natural beef. I'd feel better about organic meat, but ranchers' traditions and consumers' unwillingness to pay a few cents more makes it difficult. When the Europeans announced they wouldn't buy American beef because of possible dangers to humans from animals laced up with hormones, I cheered. I mean, when will we wake up?"

After we finished the meal and pushed our chairs from the table, she said, "There's no public access in the Flint Hills worth talking about, so my 'internships'—the real name is Prairie Women Adventures—help out, and I have some control over who explores my land. I think a private response like this is better than the prairie park, even if I can only take five or six people a week."

I said, "You're an assault-rifle radical until the park comes up, and then you turn into a shoot-that-clock reactionary, and she said again, "Inconsistency is just great. You know that my grandmother was one of the leading park opponents, but I've never been opposed to maintaining grassland, although I am against overrunning the place. You've got two million acres in Yellowstone, and now they're moving out bears instead of Winnebagos—that's mismanagement I don't want to see happen here." She was warming up, and what she took to be my views on issues may have altered her words somewhat. "I like Aldo Leopold's idea of stewardship: the recorder of deeds saying the land is mine doesn't really make it mine, but in this county I'd rather say I'm a feminist than an environmentalist. People tolerate me—they even expect me to be a feminist, but being an environmentalist is just not an acceptable mode of behavior, although one day ranchers and conservationists are going to be on the same side. Already we both agree that the place can't be opened to Winnebagos or tourist strips and then survive."

For the third time the phone rang, and for the second time she said, "No, *he's* here," and when she sat again, she said, "I've learned that I can't get the land to do what I want it to do—mostly I have to follow what *it* wants to do, so it's my responsibility to learn how the prairie lives. If the land wants fire, I give it a match. I'm a manager, that's all, and basically what I am is a bug manager. What

I'm really interested in is my cows' digestion, and that's a result of microorganisms in soil and water and stomachs. Basically, this is a bug ranch. Don't thank a rancher for your steak—thank bugs."

I leaned toward the floor and said, "Thank you one and all, and she groaned and with her pink sneaker kicked my chair. She said, "Look: one day I'm going to write an essay called 'Maggots and Rattlesnakes,' and the idea will be that we're all in this together, even the things we may not like. Maggots are an integral part of my world, where I have dead animals and disease. I need all kinds of decay—my business depends on it. My crop is really grass, and cattle are just the means to harvest and package it."

I said that not everyone here saw things that way, and especially the absentee landlords did not seem to act as stewards, and Jane said, "The bad thing about absentee ownership is the system of payments where the managing cowhand receives the check from the cattle owner and then pays the landlord. We need to reroute it so that the cattle owner pays the landlord, who will inspect the pastures to protect her investment, and then pay the cowhand. The way it is now, in the short term overgrazing gives more dollars to managers and cattle owners."

I asked whether absentee owners didn't often treat their land like old-time bonds, where all the investor did was clip a coupon and send it in, and she said, "It's hard to care about what you don't see. A couple of years ago I wanted to double absentee owners' taxes, which would have included Evan, and the county treasurer said she'd go along if I could convince my father. Well, good-bye to that idea." Jane sat quietly for a while, and I picked up the plates, and she said, "If anyone anywhere should be environmentalists, all of us here should: if we lose the land's productivity, we've lost our hope of living on here."

Out along the near tracks the Santa Fe horned and die-seled through Bazaar, its noisy regularity a kind of Big Ben to the hamlet. Jane said, "Ask one last question and then go home," and I asked what was so special about the Flint Hills. Picking and handling her words carefully, as if they were newborn, and taking her time, she said, "These hills are so everlasting. I get bored with the work sometimes but never the place. But you need an excuse to stay on, and ranching is one we all understand." And, a moment later: "I've come to see that if I can sit still, things and people will come here. Even canners like you." And she was quiet and then said, "Maybe that's the religion I left Kansas to find." There was a silence and then, when I thought it safe, I said, "And then you clicked the heels of your ruby slippers three times, and she let fly a pink sneaker, and she said quietly, "Nevertheless."

After I was out the door and in the cool and dewed night, a chuck-will's-widow calling from a wooded slope, I noticed for the first time her Jeep license-plate letters: IMNXTC. □



FIRST ENCOUNTERS

JOAN CRAWFORD AND BETTE DAVIS

AFTER A YEAR IN Hollywood, playing teary-eyed ingenues in dull movies, Bette Davis is ready to throw in the Kleenex and head back to Broadway. Her bags are packed when Warner Brothers surprises her with a contract and transforms her into a platinum blonde. Film exhibitors take note, and in 1932 vote her a "Star of Tomorrow." At the awards banquet the diminutive Davis steps up to the radio microphones and is about to gush her thanks over the airwaves when loud shrieks are heard, followed by the glittering entrance of Joan Crawford and her husband, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. The radio crew and photographers zoom to the divine couple, leaving Davis stranded, forgotten—and fuming.

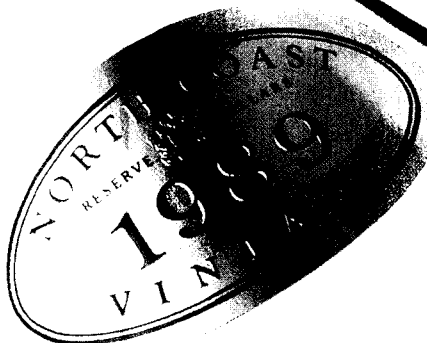
Fade to 1935. Davis, too, is now a star. Crawford, her marriage to Fairbanks and her affair with Clark Gable both over, eyes her new leading man, Franchot Tone. Just as their romance heats up, Tone is sent over to Warner's to co-star in *Dangerous* with Davis. She's married, but falls for Tone anyway. She demands that their scenes together be expanded, which entails

more private meetings. Davis is sure she can win the upper-class Phi Beta Kappa from the shallow movie queen. She is wrong. When shooting ends, Crawford and Tone marry. Davis's consolation is her first Oscar.

Cut to 1942. The war is on. Crawford will soon disband her fan club for the duration. Davis wonders if she should continue acting. "But then I felt that's what the enemy wanted—to destroy and paralyze America. So I decided to keep on working." By 1945 she is the highest-paid woman in America, but soon thereafter the tide turns. Crawford, now at Warner's, wins an Oscar for *Mildred Pierce* and replaces Davis as the studio's big money-maker.

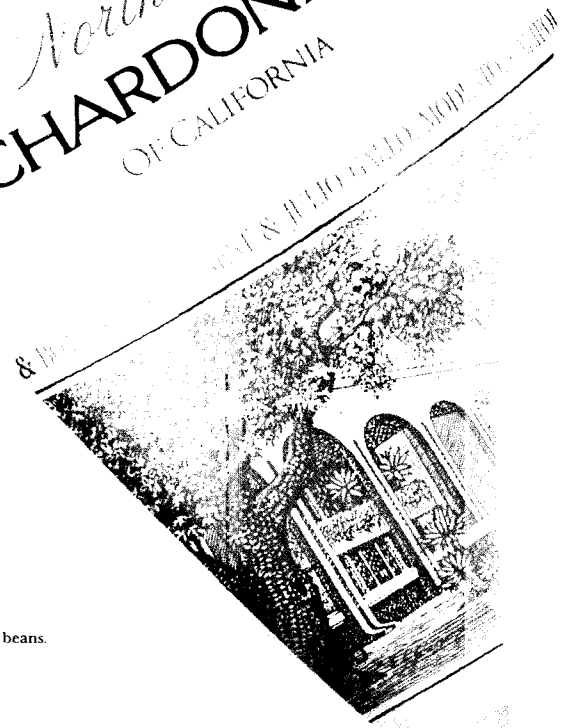
The years slip away but the grudges don't. In 1962 both are fifty-four, washed up in Hollywood, and the survivors of four marriages apiece when, in desperation, they sign to co-star in *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* Bette plays Joan's sister, who, jealous of her sibling's success, schemes to kill her. You could hardly call it a stretch.

—Edward Sorel



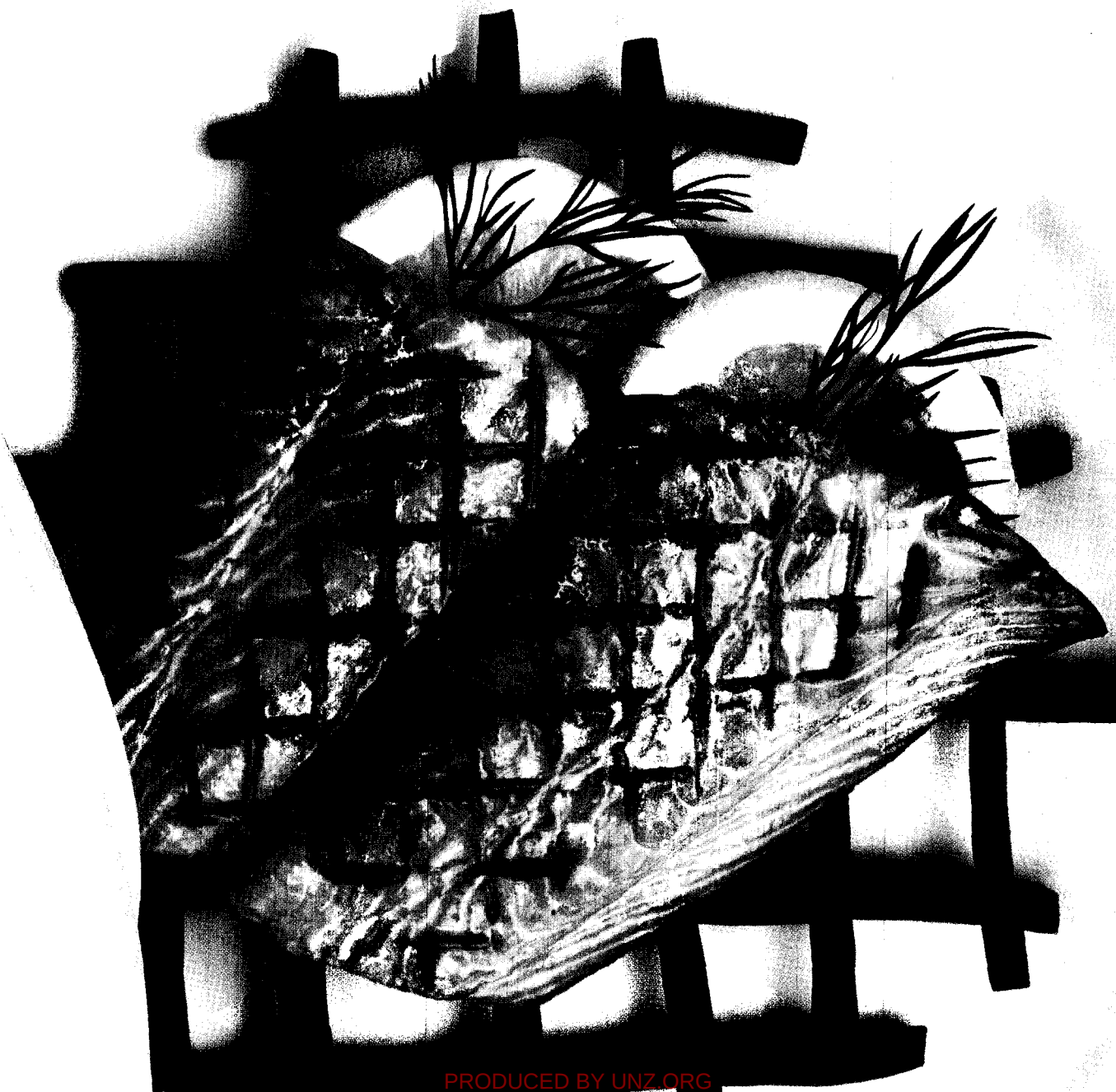
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A Short Story



Sole Custody

by Lynna Williams

ANNA HAS DECIDED TO FLY TO CHICAGO TO kidnap her ex-husband's new baby. She hasn't known what to pack for this trip—she does not know how long she will be gone or exactly where she will go when she has the child—and the garment bag she is dragging past the boarding gate to the airplane is swollen with too many sweaters and shoes. When she leaves Dallas on business for her law office, she is a no-nonsense “two dresses, one jacket, two blouses, one skirt” packer who takes pleasure in weaving in and out between more heavily burdened travelers. On the plane Anna has to ask a young man wearing a baseball jersey to help her lift the bag into the overhead compartment. She sits down feeling relieved that the evidence she is not herself today has been safely hidden away. Before she fastens her seat belt, Anna stands to look around the airplane. The flight isn't crowded for a Friday morning, and she sees only three children, little boys in Sunday suits, the oldest about nine. They seem to be traveling alone; as she watches, the oldest reaches across the middle seat to wipe cracker crumbs from around the mouth of the smallest boy. The sweetness of it reaches her from a dozen rows back, and she looks away. She is glad she has seen the boys so early in the trip, though, because she has learned that the unexpected—what she does not see coming—can pierce her heart.

Since her daughter, Katie, died, Anna has made a routine of this searching out of the faces of children in public places. She looks directly at them, she registers that they are individual and alive, and she feels protected in some way from the unexpected shocks of recognition that once made it difficult for her to see any child without crying for Katie.

The plane is in the air now, and Anna settles back in her seat. She has not slept more than a few hours since this business with Jay started, four days ago, and she is tempted to let exhaustion take over for the two-hour flight to O'Hare. She will have time later to think about

what she is going to do, she decides, and she works her head against the headrest, waiting for sleep to overtake her. She has only a second to prepare herself for the image rising before her. She and Katie are at the kitchen table in the old house on Turtle Creek. It is the summer before Katie got sick, so she was five, and she had come home from day camp so excited about her discovery of dinosaurs that Anna had to hold her against the overpowering joy of it.

“Slow down, Squeaky, I can't understand what you're saying,” Anna said when Katie was gathered in her lap. Katie looked at her, all eyes and mouth and impatience. “Mommy, I don't have *time*,” she said, scrambling off Anna's lap in a run. She came back into the kitchen with scissors and glue and several colors of construction paper, and she and Anna made blue dinosaurs instead of dinner.

Anna opens her eyes. She is not going to be able to sleep, and she uncovers her mouth, where one hand has gone automatically at the thought of Katie feeding cheese to a grinning construction-paper dinosaur.

Two and a half years have passed since Katie's death. Anna has different ways of measuring the time: two base-

ball seasons, two birthdays, two rounds of fall school clothes in Sanger's downtown window. At times Anna is deliberate in remembering her daughter; she shuts out the world with

Since the death of her daughter, Anna searches the faces of children in public places, noting that they are individual and alive, not re-enactments of Katie

no other purpose than to recall whole some piece of her past with Katie. At other times thoughts of her daughter are like Muzak in Anna's mind: low-key and familiar, but still capable of sudden melodic riffs, like the replay of Katie's voice calling from her bedroom, “Mommy? What can we use for its eyes? I need you, Mommy!”

Anna shakes her head to clear it, because the memories are too strong today, and she does not want to think about Katie here, does not want to be a grieving mother reliving the past in a jet somewhere over Oklahoma. She has other things to think about, and she sits up straight, the way she does in court.

"KIDNAPPING" IS THE WRONG WORD. ANNA has no plans to take the baby—his name is Eli—across state lines. She wants to be clear about this: Jay is the one with delusions, not she; only because he has fixed on Katie as their object is Anna on this plane.

That she even saw the story Jay wrote for *Chicago* magazine was an accident; it had arrived in Monday's office mail from a lawyer friend in Evanston with a note written across the top: "I know you and Jay aren't in contact anymore, but he told you about this, right?" The note said more, but Anna had stopped reading, smiling at the phrase "in contact." It had a raffish air she liked, as though she and Jay were two circling small planes whose pilots had decided, on a whim, to switch their radios off. But when she thought about it, it seemed as good a way as any to describe all the things that she and Jay weren't to each other anymore. She put the clipping away, but as she worked her way slowly through a stack of depositions, she began to wonder what Jay was supposed to have told her. Finally she fished it out of the envelope and sat back to read it. *This is a joke*, she thought, and then, just as quickly, she knew that it was not. "No," she said, so loudly that her secretary, Maryanne, came around the corner to ask what was wrong. "Nothing. Shut the door," Anna said, and turned her head before she could see the look—"Now what's wrong?"—on Maryanne's face.

"I knew a woman once the same thing happened to," Anna said out loud, the words with which Maryanne greeted every atrocity that brought people into the offices of Seddon and Hardwicke. Hearing herself speak that comfortable lie allowed her to pick up the story again and go on. It was about the birth of Eli, four months earlier, and Jay's conviction, growing every day, that this happy little boy was Katie, astonishingly alive in him.

"I will tell you honestly that I had not been a man who believed in God, and after my little girl died, there was nothing I believed in at all," Jay had written.

So I do not pretend to know the answers to this miracle that has given me my daughter back again, in a little boy who looks nothing like her, but bears the unmistakable imprint of her soul. I do not need those answers, because I have all that matters here with me, in the child my wife, Ellen, and I have given safe passage back into this world.

The story wasn't long, only a page, and as Anna read it again, it shrank even more, until it was only that one paragraph. She read the lines over and over, looking for any suggestion that this was metaphor, that Jay simply meant that Katie lived on in Eli because any new life is a rebirth. It wasn't there. He meant what he said: Katie had returned to him. Just him. Then Anna read the words out loud, bearing down harder on the personal pronouns each time. *My daughter. My little girl. Here with me. My wife, Ellen, and I.* Then she went back to the beginning and started over, as though she might have overlooked the mention of Katie's mother, the acknowledgment that Katie had had a mother at all before she died. Nothing.

When she was done, when she had studied the twelve paragraphs of text as carefully as she would analyze a brief, she walked down the hall and filled the bathroom sink with cold water. Then she did what Katie had christened "face swimming," holding her hair back with one hand and submerging her face up to the hairline in the basin, feeling the cooling movement of the water all around her. As she did, she saw Katie standing on the beach at Padre Island at high tide, the straps of her pink bathing suit falling over her shoulders, clapping her hands at the ocean's retreat. Anna let go of her hair and gripped the basin, so tightly that the color slowly left her hands.

After a long moment, when most of the wildness was gone from her face—when she could say to Maryanne,



"Sorry I yelled. It's just the Sanford plea bargain falling apart again"—Anna went back into her office, where pictures of Katie were hung low over the couch, and shut the door. She lay down on the couch and for the first time in years summoned what had once been familiar and dear, not about Katie but about Jay—before Katie got sick, before everything changed. That Jay had had almost no spite, and even less sense of property: he forgave everyone everything, and he let go of whatever was his that might be needed elsewhere, secrets as casually as sweaters or bites of ballpark hot dogs. Anna looked at the clipping in her hand. Who was Jay now? She had no idea; she simply had no reference points that were of any use to her, nothing in the past that could explain this—that Jay had become a man capable of claiming custody of their only child, living and dead.

She sat up and pulled the Rolodex from the sofa table into her lap. Flipping to *W*, she found the listing for Jay Whitmore and the number he had given her during the sale of the house. Punching down hard on each number, Anna felt stronger already, as though she were really doing something now and would make sense of all this soon. No one answered. Anna let the phone ring until the answering machine picked up, and a woman's voice said, "Hi. This is 457-9807. Leave your name and number and we'll call you soon. Hope it's a good day for you." At the beep Anna said, "Jay, call me," and, after hesitating a moment, added, "It's Anna," and her home and work numbers.

Over the next two days Anna dialed the number every hour and then, when she felt she might choke with all that was going unsaid, every half hour. The only answer she got was the tape wishing her a good day. "Jay. It's Anna. Call," she said every time, wondering if he would be able to hear in her voice what she saw in her mirror: a woman whose anger made her hands shake, who could not sleep or keep food down, a woman whose memories of her child had been violated by a man she had loved. "Grave-robbing," Anna called it on the morning of the third day, and let the tears come.

When Jay had not called back by Tuesday night, Anna started calling everyone she knew who might know where he was. The list was not long. Anna had been to Chicago several times on business, but only once with Jay and Katie; Jay had moved there after the separation and divorce; Anna had never met his new wife and did not know who—or what—their friends were. She concentrated instead on calling the few friends from their years together with whom Jay might still be in touch. In five hours on the telephone Anna gathered four invitations to dinner, a job offer in Denver, and the offer of a date to the symphony with Jay's old city editor at *The Dallas Morning News*.

When she hung up from the last call, not knowing much more than she had when she started, except that Ellen was apparently a schoolteacher and a blonde, Anna

went into the kitchen and made, and threw away, a tuna sandwich. She stood at the sink for a while, looking out the kitchen window the way she looked at juries when she didn't know what else she could say to them other than to remind them that she was a nice woman with a hard job. Usually when she was that low, some other idea—something else she could do—came to her fairly quickly, and that happened now. She went back into the living room and called the magazine, saying she was an old friend coming to town soon and that she needed to reach Jay. The girl on the phone—Anna imagined her as a recent college graduate who wrote narrative verse and fantasized about Jay when she was home alone eating Stouffer's—didn't know where Jay was; he wrote for them freelance and didn't check in every week. But she did tell Anna that Jay was scheduled to tape the *Chicago Morning* television show that Saturday. He would not be talking about Eli; his topic was something else he had written for the magazine, she said—the drug wars on the South Side, maybe? Anna said that sounded right, thanked her, and then, just before she hung up, asked another question.

"Oh," the girl said. "I'm sure you'll get to meet Ellen and the baby if you're at the taping. They're always with Jay."

When she hung up, Anna sat for a long time telling herself all the reasons why she had to stop here, put all this behind her, and go on, as difficult as that would be. Then she made three more phone calls. The first was to Jay, where, again, no one answered; the second was to her office, to arrange for a long weekend; and the third was to the airline.

THE PLANE BEGINS ITS DESCENT INTO O'HARE, and Anna tells herself again that she is doing the right thing. She has had no choice but to make the trip and see the truth for herself. She is sure she knows what the truth is: that the baby might have Jay's eyes, as Katie did, or the same long fingers, or her delight in anything musical, but he will have nothing more, because nothing more is possible.

Her plans for tomorrow morning are unclear; she is sure only that she wants to get close to Eli long enough to hold him in her arms. She has no criminal intent, she reminds herself; she is only going to see and touch Jay's son, nothing more. She is certain she will need only that much to write an end to this appalling postscript to Katie's death and Jay's continuing disintegration; with it done, she will tell Jay exactly what she thinks of his appropriation of Katie for his new life, hand him his son, and go home to Dallas.

The other possibility—that, holding Eli in her arms, she will see what Jay sees, believe what he believes—Anna does not consider at all.

IN THE TERMINAL ANNA WALKS, AS FAST AS HER garment bag will allow, past the people happily reassembling themselves into families. She is a hundred yards down the concourse when, to prove that she can, she looks back to see the three little boys from the plane run into the arms of a woman about her age. Anna hears the woman calling their names, "Hal! Ken! Sam!" and she starts walking again, faster this time, because she has not been prepared for the sound of a mother's voice after a long separation. She reaches the terminal doors just in time; when tears fill her eyes, it could be just the bright sunlight reflecting off the long line of Yellow Cabs. "Damn," Anna says, because the Yellow Cabs are orange. The summer Katie was four, and Jay was writing a series about transportation in the year 2000, the three of them took cabs all over the United States on their way to trains and buses and airplanes. Katie loved the fact that all of them sat in the back seat together, but she never did get over her disappointment that Yellow Cabs were usually some other color. Anna had forgotten that, and when she is directed to a blue Town Taxi, something in her face makes the cabdriver especially respectful of her bag. On the Loop, headed for The Palmer House, Anna takes out a compact and dabs at her eyes until the cabdriver looks less concerned. Then she sits back in her seat and shakes her head, because she does not believe she has been crying over a fleet of misnamed cabs.

All right, she thinks. What if Jay is telling the truth?

"Stop it," Anna says then, and the cabdriver looks concerned again and asks if she's changed her mind about The Palmer House. "No," Anna says. "No, I haven't."

He looks at her and away, as if to say, "Whatever, lady," and she laughs. After a moment they are both laughing, and for the rest of the ride she loses herself in a conversation about the sixties.

At The Palmer House, Anna tips the driver five dollars and goes inside feeling better than she has since she opened her mail on Monday. *I'll see the baby and I'll go home*, she thinks, and the knowledge that she can do just that—she can end it there—goes with her upstairs to her room. But a few minutes later, unpacking, seeing the indecision she felt in Dallas take shape on the bed in the growing pile of clothes, Anna feels her optimism leave her all at once, and she sits down. *What am I doing here?* she thinks, and then closes her eyes, the way Katie did when she begged for a scary story and then didn't want to see what might be waiting for her down the hallway. But Anna doesn't have to conjure up some anonymous bogeyman. She knows exactly what is scaring her; she has already said the words to herself, in the cab.

The truth is that when Katie was first sick, Anna saw the future and knew that her daughter was not just ill but dying. That being the case, how can she be sure Jay's delusion is only that and nothing more? The answer is that she cannot be sure, and of all the reasons she has to de-

spise Jay—as many reasons as she once had to love him—this return of uncertainty about what is possible and what is not possible is what Anna is now holding against him most.

Anna's vision happened the day after Katie's admission to the hospital, before the lymphoma was diagnosed, a fall afternoon when all the radios in the children's ward were turned to game five of the World Series. Anna was coming back from the library with an armful of the "big girl" books that Katie took such pleasure in pretending she could read.

The door to the room was half open; when Anna shifted the books in her arms and used her elbows to push against it, she saw Katie asleep on her back, her right arm, the one with the IV needle in it, crooked over her heart. Anna started to back away—Katie had never before been able to sleep on her own, without her mother or father in the room—but as she did, she looked at the bed again, and this time Katie was dead. She could think of no other way to say it: Anna looked at her daughter and knew that the dripping IV was the cruelest kind of lie and that Katie was gone. In that instant—when Anna reached for the wall and understood that no support in the world was strong enough for the weight she would always carry now—a smiling nurse pushed past to wake Katie for her medication, and Anna had her daughter back again.

THINKING ABOUT THAT DAY IN THE HOSPITAL, Anna walks around her hotel room turning on every light, first the wall switches that control the lighting over the bed and by the window, then the heat lamp in the bathroom, and then the lamps by the bed. She needs this light to see what she is doing. She is deliberately breaking the rules she set for herself after Katie died, rules she believes have made it possible for her to wake up in the morning, go downtown to practice law, and come home again at night, all without breaking apart. The rules say she can remember anything about Katie as long as she omits the six months after the first hospital admission, the six months when Katie was dying.

But she cannot deal with tomorrow, she cannot make sense of any of this, if she does not think about just that time—or, more particularly, Jay and Katie in that time. So, shaking a little, because she knows that if she starts this, she will have to finish it somehow, Anna reaches for the phone and dials Jay's number again. When she hears only the ringing that makes her think of Katie chasing crickets on Turtle Creek, she puts the phone down and walks out of her hotel room.

On the street Anna waits until another Town Taxi stops for her. She gives the driver Jay's address in Oak Park, and in twenty minutes the cab is in front of a red-brick bungalow. The cabdriver tells Anna where she can catch

a bus back to town when she is through, and drives away, leaving her alone.

It is early evening by now, time for people to be coming home from work, but the street is quiet. Anna has a sudden image of herself standing on the sidewalk in front of Jay's house, and she straightens her suit coat and begins to walk down the driveway to the front porch. The door is painted bright green—the door knocker is a brass frog with its legs dangling free—and Anna feels better suddenly, as if this violation of taste were the final proof that Jay is some other person now. She pounds the frog on the door, a little harder than necessary; when no one comes to the door, she walks across the porch to the bay window. The drapes are white gauze—much too thin, Anna thinks—and she has no difficulty seeing into the living room. She recognizes a few pieces of furniture—a love seat re-covered in rose, an oak refectory table—but the dominant decor is classic “couple with four-month-old baby.” Blankets and stuffed animals are strewn everywhere; a huge teddy bear is strapped into a windup swing that Eli is still too young to use. Turning her head, Anna sees pictures arranged in two rows on the far wall. She leans into the window and squints, trying to make the shapes and colors come into focus. She is scanning the top row for the second time, unable to make out either Jay or a baby, when her eyes shift to the pictures arranged below. In only a second Anna realizes that every picture there is a picture of Katie.

Anna takes a step back from the window and comes down hard on a squeaky toy shaped like an airplane. She bends over, takes the toy into her hands, cradling it against the cry it makes when touched, and sits down on the porch steps. She is still carrying it when she walks away from the house.

The bus lets her off three blocks from the hotel; back in her room she lays the airplane toy on the table in front of her. She thinks about Jay building a shrine to Katie, on his wall and in his little boy, and she pulls the toy to her. *Katie*, she thinks. *Jay*.

AFTER ANNA'S VISION, IN THE TIME THE NURSE needed to get to Katie's bed by the window, Anna's world shrank to one resolve—"I will not scream." After a moment she was able to say, in a voice that sounded only a little out of breath, "I'm going to get some coffee while you're with her; I'll be right back." She walked out of the room and down the hallway slowly, because she felt as if any sudden movement might bring back the vision of Katie motionless in her bed. In the women's bathroom she went into a stall and waited until the two nurses talking at the sinks had gone. Then she took their place at the mirror, leaning forward to see if her face had changed in any way that would reveal to Katie and Jay what she knew to be true—that the world had undergone so fundamental an

alteration as to bring all natural laws into question. She looked tired, nothing more than that, and she understood suddenly that she had entered some new land, where everything looked the same and Katie was dying. The cruelty of it caught her just below the breastbone, and before she could stop it, a sound came out of her that she had never heard before. She backed away from the sink, from that sound, into a stall, and sat down, taking in mouthfuls of air against the panic rising in her, concentrating only on letting air out, evenly, slowly, until she was sure that she was not going to scream. Then, because she could do nothing else, she got up and walked out of the lounge toward Katie's room.

She was there in five minutes, sitting by the bed, telling Katie about a princess with an irritable dolphin for a governess. The story was familiar—if she paused too long, Katie finished the sentence and went on without her—but Anna had become a different woman, with the singleness of purpose she imagined priests had. Katie was to be her only focus now, since Katie was the only map of any use in both the old world and the new.

Several times that afternoon Anna thought about telling Jay what she had seen—what she now believed was Katie's future—but when he came into the room carrying Katie's bears, she looked at him and did not speak. The three of them were in this new land together now—the land made real by her vision, the land where five-year-olds could die—and Anna could not say what the rules were anymore. She could not be sure, but she thought that in this peculiar universe saying out loud the words "Jay, Katie is going to die" might make it happen. So she kept silent, and in that silence, Anna would come to believe later, two things happened: Her marriage to Jay ended. And she became a believer in impossible things, because if Katie could die, what of impossibility was left?

Two days after Anna's vision the doctors invited her and Jay into a conference room and, using color transparencies for emphasis, told them that while great strides were being made every day, Katie's cancer was incurable. She might live a year, they said, she might not live three months; everything would be done for her, but nothing short of a miracle would save her life. Anna could hear the voices—Jay's, rising in disbelief and then rage, the doctors', sympathetic but firm—but she had stopped listening. She already knew that Katie was going to die, and when Jay stopped talking and began to cry, she felt a faint impatience. The feeling was replaced by shame as he reached for her and she accepted his embrace, when all she wanted to do was get away from the conference table, where the slides documenting the probable progression of Katie's disease were spread out like a poker hand. The doctors said again how sorry they were and left; Anna and Jay stayed on at the table. Jay was still crying, softly, the way Katie did when she was pushed off a ride at the playground and thought she'd never get back on. "Anna," Jay

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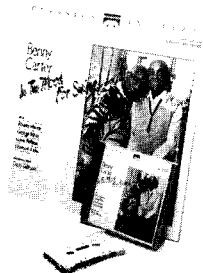
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said then, and she thought he was going to tell her they would get through this together, for Katie's sake. "Anna, Katie's not going to die. I know she isn't," Jay said. He was saying it again when Anna slipped her hands out of his and left the room.

ANNA AND JAY BOTH TOOK INDEFINITE LEAVES of absence from their jobs, Anna as a public defender and Jay as a political reporter for *The Dallas Morning News*, and made a second home in Katie's corner room at Children's.

Looking back, Anna marveled at the ease with which she and Jay separated to take up different orbits around Katie. When they were not tending to her in some way, both did the other things that, incredibly, still had to be done. They ate and made telephone calls; they talked about anything that did not matter; they took turns staying with Katie while the other went on short walks around the hospital; sometimes they slept or drove home to do laundry at a house that now seemed like a museum of the life they had had together when Katie was well. Anna knew that she—the Anna she had been outside Katie's room that day—seemed not to exist anymore, and certainly the Jay and Anna they had been together

were gone, replaced by these people who smiled and played and cried with Katie, but were silent and distracted with each other.

Some part of Anna knew that she and Jay should be talking more, knew that there must be some comfort they could give each other, but she could think of no route she could take to Jay that would not bring her face to face with his conviction that Katie was going to live. As much as she wanted to believe that, she did not—and the fact that Jay never wavered, even as Katie got sicker every day, created a distance between them that grew until it was itself fully formed, a longer

and heavier twin to their dying child. Still, at times Anna looked at Jay and wanted her old life back, wanted him back—wanted it so badly that she could not catch her breath. Once, she saw Jay watching her and knew that he was thinking about her too. Anna loved him then, but in the next moment they both looked at Katie, impossibly small in the white hospital bed, and they let each other go. They had other priorities; for the six months Katie took to die, every act of Anna's was in service to her memory.

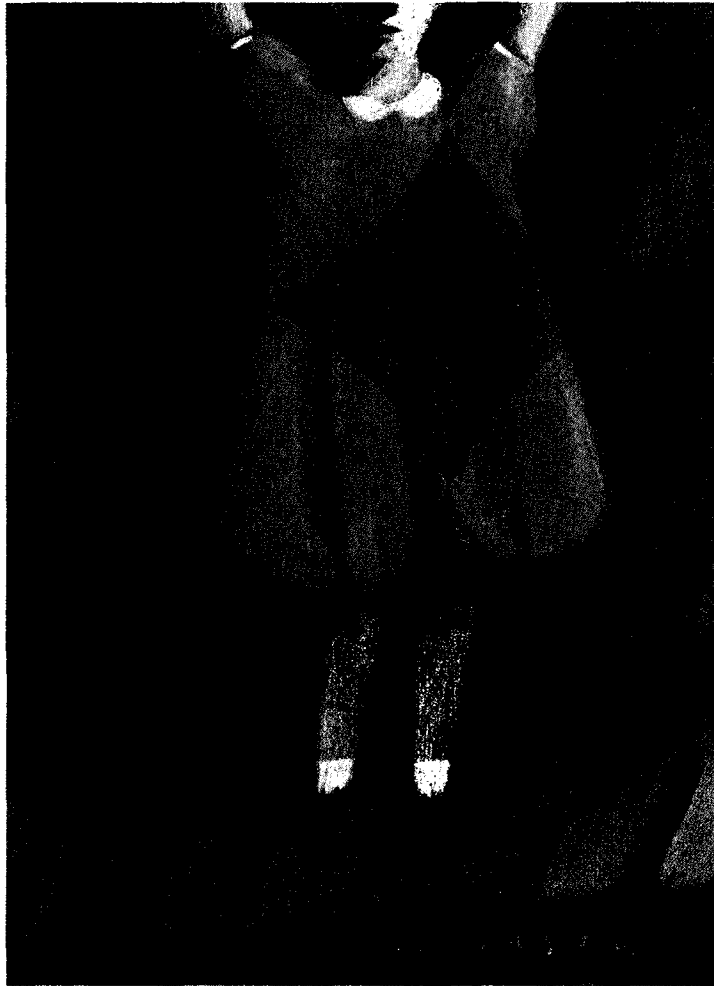
I will never forget this, Anna thought every time she rubbed Katie's back or felt her heart beat when she bent

to kiss her good-night or sat up playing Go Fish with her or held her against the pain that came with daybreak. *This is what I will have when Katie is gone.*

A hundred times after Katie was gone, Anna thought that the different ways she and Jay were with each other in those last months had to do with Anna's vision in the hospital—with the certain knowledge she had, and Jay did not, that Katie would die. Anna shamelessly hedged her bets: she bargained endlessly for Katie's life with a God she had not talked to since eighth grade, but every time she touched Katie or said her name, she was saying good-bye. Jay continued to make no bets at all: he simply never saw Katie's death as a possibility. As Anna watched,

he raised denial to greater heights each day, until, at the funeral, he looked sick not so much with grief as with some awful surprise. When Jay held Katie or kissed her, he was not saying, as Anna did, "I will not forget this." He was saying, "I can throw this moment away. We will have *years* of other moments."

When it was much too late, on the day when Katie went into a coma from which she did not wake, Anna looked up and saw, really saw, Jay. He was leaning over Katie's bed, his left hand stretched out around the tubes and oxygen mask to stroke her hair back from her forehead. "Come on, Squeaky," he was saying. "It's a beauti-



ful day, and Daddy's here. Open your eyes, Squeaker. Let Daddy see you."

Jay never stopped talking as he smoothed Katie's hair over and over, but Anna could not listen. She went out into the hall and leaned against the wall, closing her eyes against the image of Jay still alive to hope when no hope remained. And for the first time Anna realized what it would mean to Jay, after Katie was dead, that he had never said good-bye. She felt dazed, as though she had come out of the dark into sunlight so bright she could barely look into it. "Jay," she said, and felt a tug of recognition that propelled her back into Katie's room. She walked toward Jay, still at Katie's bed; she could not save Katie, she knew that, but she could save Jay. She could make him save himself. "Jay," she said, but he did not turn to look at her, and he shook off the hand she reached out to him. "I'm talking to Katie now, Anna," he said. And then, without pausing, "Where were we, baby? Oh, well, when I was little, everybody in Oak Cliff rode horses on Saturday morning, and my horse was the best. You'll have a horse when you're bigger; not next year, next year you'll still be too small, but the year after that, for sure."

"Jay," Anna said again, and when he did not respond, she went back into the hall and wept for them all. She knew then that she was going to lose them both, but she did what she had to do: she sat by Katie's bed, listening to the *EEK! eek!* the portable life-support system made as it took each breath for Katie; she tried again to talk to Jay. But in the end she stopped trying, because she did not have any energy to spare for anything but the task of gathering her memories. If that was the only way she could keep Katie with her, she must have them all. By then Anna knew that memories were the only thing she would be able to salvage.

She was right about that, too. Four months after Katie's death she and Jay separated, and six months after that the divorce was final. Anna signed the papers dated September 8, 1986, but she knew that other dates mattered more: the day Katie came in from the back yard complaining that her stomach hurt; the day Anna decided not to share her vision with Jay; the day Anna stopped trying to make Jay face the truth and say good-bye to his child; and, finally, the day Katie died. When his daughter was gone, when Jay was made to see that all his hope and bravado had brought him nothing, he blamed Anna. "You knew she was going to die," he screamed at her before he left, and Anna closed her eyes and saw Katie clearly, wearing a red pompon hat and curling her tongue at a nurse holding a tray of medicines. Her mind full of Katie, she did not have to hear Jay shouting at her or the front door slam or the car pull out of the driveway. Most of all she did not have to hear the indictment behind the words: You believed in her death, and Katie died. What would have happened if both of us had believed in her life?

THE CLOCK BY ANNA'S BED READS FIVE AFTER midnight when she has remembered everything, and she stands up to turn off the lights. She is still thinking about the day Jay left the house, about the way Jay blamed her for what he saw as her easier acceptance of Katie's death. If she sees him tomorrow, she thinks, she will say what she never said in the months after Katie's funeral: "Children aren't like Tinkerbell, Jay; wishing doesn't make them live." Not *if*, she thinks, *when*. She will see Jay tomorrow, Jay and Eli, and she will see for herself what is true and what is not. She stops by the table and dials Jay's number again; he answers on the third ring. "Hello," he says. "Hello. Who is this?" Anna has not heard his voice in more than a year, and she stands for a moment listening before she puts the receiver down. She will talk to Jay tomorrow.

In bed Anna lies with the curtains open wide enough to see the lights of the Sears Tower. She has never run a marathon, but she imagines that this is how racers feel coming over the top of a hill toward the finish line. She wants to get a glass of water, but stays where she is, too tired to move; she is drained, but she feels good, too. She has remembered Katie and Jay, and she has not fallen apart. And she knows what she is going to do next. Waiting for sleep, Anna sees for the first time how zealously she has regulated her memories of Katie in the years since her death: shaping their content, guarding against unwanted appearances by other characters like Jay or the doctors with the color slides, even selecting the times when it is "appropriate" to remember. *How sad*, Anna thinks, and is surprised at the choice of words, since she has only been protecting herself against more pain.

Some choices, though, have not been Anna's to make: some things she believed she would never forget she has forgotten. Katie would be eight this year—she would be wearing her hair in a braid and taking piano—but Anna can no longer get an exact picture of Katie's face when she closes her eyes. She can remember so much—colors, physical sensations, smells, sounds: Katie's skin, like a baby seal's, wet and taut, when she was laid on Anna's belly after her birth; her laugh; her hair after a bath; the unholy joy in her eyes the day she discovered the "music" toilets make when flushed; tears standing on her eyelashes. But Anna cannot make her child's face come into focus. The image is unmistakably Katie, but it is indistinct, soft, without edges or depth. Anna is almost asleep now—she can feel herself being pulled down into darkness—but she is still thinking about Katie's face and that she must look at pictures now to see it exactly. For an instant a panicky thought pushes sleep away: *Will I know when I hold Eli? Will I know if it's Katie?* Anna digs her body farther into the sheets, taking deep breaths to quiet herself. *I'll know*, she thinks, and carries that with her into the night.

ANNA WAKES TO ANOTHER TRUTH, A TRUTH that is with her until she fumbles for the light and makes it shrink back in the darkness: Anna loved Katie—oh, God, so much—and Katie loved her. But Katie was Jay's too. Anna sits up in bed and pulls her knees to her chest, wanting to feel any kind of human warmth. She takes a deep breath and lets it go, letting the truth escape with it into the hotel room: Katie loved Jay best. It started when Anna was still pregnant, when Jay decided the baby was a girl and named her Katie Patricia, after both of her grandmothers. When Katie was born, Jay behaved as though they had always known each other, and from the beginning Katie seemed to believe it too. Anna tightens her grip on her knees, because none of these memories are safe.

Her moments with Katie were different. In her memories, loving experiments with action and sound and dialogue, she and Katie made the construction-paper dinosaurs. Anna can see it clearly: Katie hunched over the kitchen table with a blue crayon, coloring in the eyes, saying, "How do I make eyelashes, Mommy? And can we make them so they'll fly?"

Anna's memories are lies and not lies, and now, sitting up in the Palmer House double bed, she acknowledges that. She has done what she had to do: she has taken Jay's memories of Katie as hers. After the funeral, when she and Jay went back to the house, where there was no air, or no air that Anna could breathe without gasping, she realized that in almost every memory of Katie she had stored so carefully, her daughter was dying. She screamed at Jay, "Help me; I can't see Katie's face," and he looked at her for a long time before he helped her into bed. "She loved me," she said into Jay's face when he bent to cover her with a quilt. "Of course she did," was all he said. That night he moved into the guest bedroom, and Anna could not bring herself to go to him. After a while she no longer wanted to. She had her memories.

IN THE MORNING ANNA ORDERS ROOM-SERVICE orange juice and eggs, and sits reading the *Chicago Tribune* until it's time to leave for the network affiliate where the show is being taped. She walks out of the hotel onto Michigan Avenue and turns left, toward Water Tower Place. She knows where she is going and she walks quickly, shivering a little against the North Shore wind. At the television station she stands in line with other men and women waiting to go upstairs to the taping. Twice she hears Jay's name and turns around, but it's only a neighborhood activist talking about his interview with a fourteen-year-old crack dealer. When the elevator comes, Anna is the first on; on the sixteenth floor she gets off last and lags behind in the corridor as the ushers show the audience members to their seats. Suddenly Anna feels ridiculous, not like a lawyer or even a wronged woman but simply like a person who gets

caught making up stories. What is she going to do here? She has put her energy into the revision of her personal history; when she has thought of this place at all, she has imagined Jay and Ellen and Eli in plain sight, waiting for her. Now she's here, and they are nowhere to be seen.

"I loved my daughter," Anna says aloud, and feels something give inside her, because this is true. She knows it is. People are looking at her now, but she does what she does in court: she picks one face, a woman about her own age wearing a TAKE BACK THE NIGHT! T-shirt, and she talks directly to her. "She died, and I tried to keep her with me anyway. I didn't want to share her with anyone. But she's gone. Katie's gone." People are moving away from her, wondering in low voices what to do, but the woman Anna is speaking to does not back away. She takes Anna's hands and holds them in hers, tightly, the way Katie held the "fairies" they captured on summer nights on the front lawn. Anna is crying now, because she remembers that. On hot nights after dinner, she and Katie took their iced tea to the front porch and Anna made up stories about fairies who lived in the trees and only came down for the best little girls. "Make one come, Mommy," Katie would say, and then Anna would clap her hands and push them gently on top of Katie's fists. "There's one," Anna said every time, and every time Katie echoed, "There's one."

Anna is crying harder now, because how could she not have remembered that? The woman holding her hands begins to walk backward, slowly, pulling Anna along toward a bench beside the elevator.

"Do you have a little girl?" Anna says, and the woman nods yes, her eyes filling with tears. "I'm glad," Anna says. "Thank you for helping me. I'm all right now. I just remembered something, is all."

She pulls her hands free, and takes the tissues the woman is offering. She blows her nose, a horrible wet sound that makes her laugh, and she thinks about Jay and Ellen and Eli. Behind her, in the studio, the taping has begun, and she can hear Jay's voice laying down the law about murder in the streets. She says thank you again to the woman who helped her, walks to the studio door, and looks through the square of glass. The stage and the seats are at a right angle from where she is standing; she can see Jay and, in the front row, the top half of a woman in a jogging suit, holding a baby in her arms. But Anna does not go into the studio; she turns around and walks to the elevator and then into the street. Somewhere near here is the park where she taught Katie to play hopscotch, the August day the two of them went for a walk together, leaving Jay to ride cabs around the city by himself. At the first stoplight on Michigan Avenue, Anna hesitates for a moment, because she is not sure if the park is uptown from the art museum or downtown. She is not worried, though; she crosses with the light and moves quickly through the mid-morning crowd on the sidewalk, knowing that with time she will remember everything. □

Hundreds of stone slabs crowded with carved hieroglyphs have much to tell us about one of the ancient world's most accomplished and mysterious civilizations. A group of brilliant young epigraphers, most of them from the United States, are deciphering those hieroglyphs at a pace unimagined only thirty years ago, and important new discoveries seem imminent

THE DECIPHERMENT OF ANCIENT MAYA

BY DAVID ROBERTS



Limestone panel from the eighth century A.D. depicting a ballgame. The ballplayer on the right has been defeated; the fate that awaits him is death. The glyph in the caption above the ball suggests that one of the players has a royal title

FOR ROUGHLY 650 YEARS, FROM A.D. 250 TO 900, Maya Indians, living in what is today southern Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, and western Honduras and El Salvador, created the greatest civilization ever to flourish in the pre-Columbian Western Hemisphere.

Out of the tangled jungle, among the ceiba and mahogany trees, sprang Tikal, with its 3,000 structures, ten reservoirs, and six temple-pyramids, including the tallest ancient structure (229 feet) ever found in the Americas. At Copán—"a valley of romance and wonder," according to the explorer who rediscovered it in the nineteenth century—the Maya built an exquisite ball court and a staircase of sixty-three broad steps covered with inscrip-

tions, and carved scores of vivid sculptures of gods out of green volcanic tuff. During the 650 years of greatest vitality, now called the Classic Period, the Maya built some 200 cities. At Palenque they executed a labyrinthine palace complex festooned with eloquent stuccos; at Bonampak they created the finest ancient mural paintings in the New World; at Quiriguá they built a stone monument thirty-five feet high, covered with bas-relief portraits and intricate hieroglyphs. Their small-scale art was rich and various: jade masks, carved wooden lintels, bones engraved with delicate vignettes, painted chocolate cups, ceramic figurines, bowls and pots of stunning design. And in creating a true writing system, the Maya accomplished something not achieved by either of the other two pre-

eminent New World cultures, the Aztec and the Inca.

Abruptly and mysteriously, at the end of the ninth century the great Mayan civilization collapsed. When the Spaniards came, 700 years later, the Maya were still linked, intellectually and spiritually, to the Classic Period. But the conquistadors were more interested in gold and conversions to Christianity than in ancient cities. The devastations of war, slavery, and disease killed 90 percent of the Maya. In the wake of this genocide most surviving links to the Classic Period were severed.

The rediscovery of this vanished ancient culture dates from the daring explorations of an American lawyer named John Lloyd Stephens and an English artist named Frederick Catherwood, who prowled through Central American jungles from 1839 to 1842. Catherwood's skillful engravings showed scores of upright stone slabs, or stelae, whose surfaces were crowded with columns of strange but suggestive symbols. Stephens's books about his explorations with Catherwood became best sellers, and curiosity about this lost Mayan glory seized the public imagination.

The survival of the carved hieroglyphs, on hundreds of stelae moldering in the jungle, promised a rich understanding of the ancient city-builders. Musing on Copán, Stephens wrote, "One thing I believe, that its history is graven on its monuments. . . . Who shall read them?" Scholars soon struggled to decipher the arcane writing system, but a century's toil produced almost nothing in the way of useful translation. A leading German expert, Paul Schellhas, predicted gloomily that the Mayan glyphs would never be deciphered.

Meanwhile, the leading archaeologists wove a supposedly comprehensive explanation of Classic Mayan civilization. Finding almost no evidence of defensive structures among the ruins of the great cities, these scholars concluded that the Maya were a peaceful, philosophical culture. Sylvanus Morley, an American expert who died in 1948, deduced that the Old Empire spread outward from such sites as Tikal and Copán during Classic times; after the collapse the Maya moved north and established a New Empire in Chichén Itzá and other sites in the Yucatán. J. Eric Thompson, an English archaeologist, doubted that the great ruins were cities; calling them "ceremonial centers," he postulated that they had been largely vacant, reserved for priests who were devoted to the worship of time.

These theories, we now know, were dead wrong.

The Egypt Analogy

AS LATE AS 1960 ONLY A FEW MAYAN GLYPHS HAD been deciphered. In the years since then, however, the decoding of Mayan writing has finally begun in earnest. During the past decade the enterprise has gathered momentum, and in the past two or three years some of the most important decipherment yet accomplished has taken place, thanks to the work of a handful of young epigraphers, most of them from the United States. Their toil is so frenetic that they have almost no time to publish. In a zealously collaborative mis-

sion they trade discoveries by way of late-night phone calls, letters dashed off on airplanes, hallway bull sessions at professional conferences.

An obvious analogy is the reappraisal of ancient Egypt. Napoleon's short-lived conquest of the Nile Delta, in 1798, spawned a popular interest in Egyptology. Ignored for centuries, one of the most magnificent civilizations of antiquity began to emerge from the shadows. The pyramids and the Sphinx became the universally familiar icons they are today. Among the booty hauled away from ancient sites were the twin obelisks called Cleopatra's Needles (one ended up in London, the other in New York), a pink obelisk from Thebes that stands today in Paris's Place de la Concorde, and a curious stone of black fine-grained basalt, carved with writing in three languages, found at Rosetta, east of Alexandria.

Since the Renaissance, antiquaries, travelers, and scientists had puzzled over the colossal ruins strewn across the sands of the lower Nile. Yet by 1820 little more was known about the Egypt of the pharaohs than what had

come down as hearsay in fragmentary Greek and Roman sources. The key to the hieroglyphic script of the ancient Egyptians had been lost around A.D. 400.

In this scholarly desert farfetched deductions by savants took root. The pyramids, they concluded, were either observatories or a stone allegory wrought by a Christian God. China had once been a colony of Egypt. Nothing of the true history or religion of the ancient Egyptians, none of the names of their kings or details of their wars, was known.

Then, in 1822, an out-of-work history teacher named Jean-François Champollion made one of the great intellectual breakthroughs of the century. Ruminating over the Rosetta Stone—which he suspected displayed paral-

A FEW SECRETS OF THE LANGUAGE WERE SOLVED EARLY, SUCH AS THE MAYAN NUMBER SYSTEM, THE WORKINGS OF THE CULTURE'S DAZZLINGLY PRECISE CALENDAR, AND THE GLYPHS FOR CERTAIN GODS AND ANIMALS. BUT FOR HALF A CENTURY AFTER 1900, WORK ON THE DECIPHERMENT OF MAYAN GLYPHS REMAINED VIRTUALLY STALLED.



Copán



sky

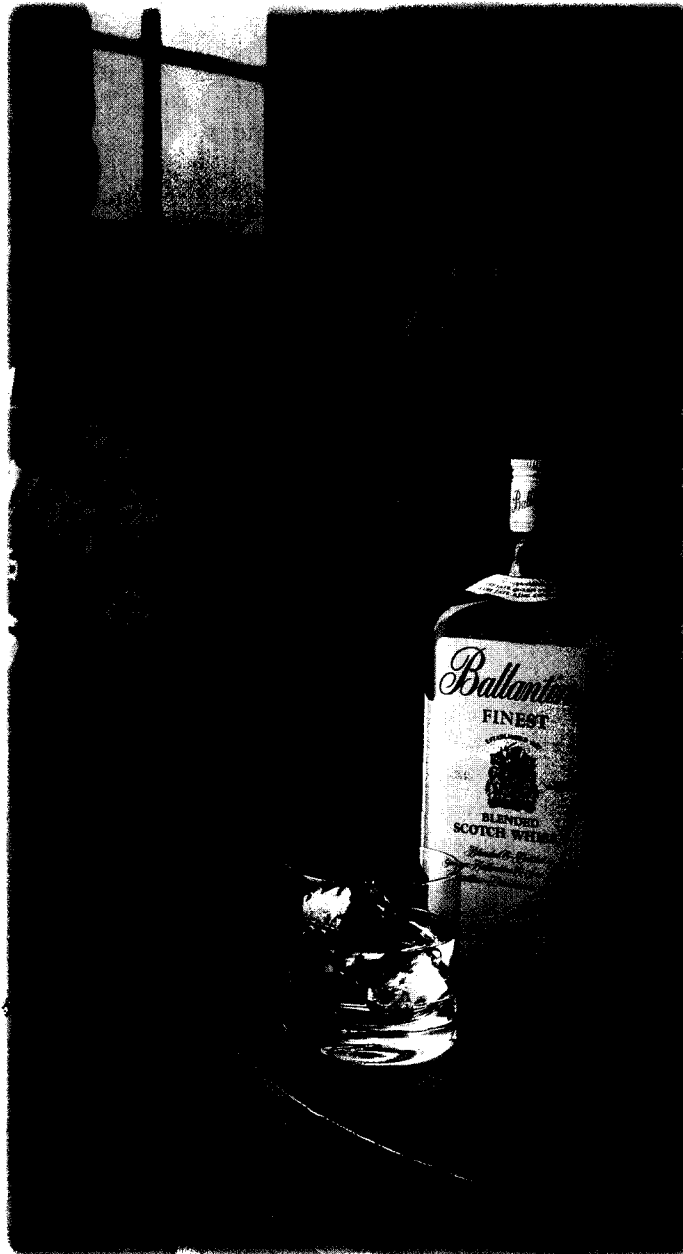


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lel texts in Greek characters, Egyptian hieroglyphics, and Demotic, a cursive version of Egyptian—the young Frenchman stumbled on the key to decipherment. His crucial insight was that the hieroglyphs were not pure logographs (symbols each of which stands for a different word) but were in large part phonetic (symbols standing for syllables, which could be combined to form many different words). From Champollion's font has sprung a flood of modern knowledge about the civilization of the Ptolemies, the Ramessides, Tutankhamen, and Cleopatra.

The ancient Maya are in many respects the New World equivalent of the Egyptians. And as Linda Schele, a University of Texas art historian and one of the best young epigraphers, puts it, "In Mayan studies this is the time of Champollion. This will never happen again—never, ever."

The Mayan Experts

NO MAYAN EPIGRAPHER HAS MADE A GREATER contribution than David Stuart. A shy, slender twenty-six-year-old graduate student at Vanderbilt, in Nashville, Stuart seems laid back, almost dreamy, compared with his colleagues, who are notorious for their manic intensity. On a withering 95° day several months ago, Stuart stood in a clearing in the virgin rain forest of northern Guatemala and "read" a fallen stela to me.

"That's the verb 'to adorn,'" Stuart said, pointing to a glyph that had been carved in soft limestone more than 1,200 years ago. "The bound captive is Jaguar Claw, who was the ruler of Seibal." Stuart stepped back to look at a whole sentence. "'Six days after the war event with Seibal,'" he recited, "'Jaguar Claw, the holy lord of Seibal, was adorned.' For sacrifice, that is. They dressed him up before they put him to death." A defeated Mayan king, the epigraphers have shown, was held captive for as long as several years, tortured, costumed and prettified, forced to play a ball game that he was preordained to lose, and then often beheaded. The bizarre sadomasochistic rituals of warfare between kings, which the ancient Maya apparently practiced instead of the wholesale slaughter of one city by another, is one of the many areas of Mayan life to which the epigraphers have brought dazzling new insights.

Stuart walked a few yards to another stela lying in the grass. Like the first slab, this one featured an elaborately decorated king standing on the back of a bound captive. Stuart pointed to a marginal detail. "See the heron with a fish in its mouth? It may be a play on words, because the Maya word for 'heron' is the same as the word for 'captive.' It's like a rebus: the Maya are using a picture of one thing to represent another."

Later, Stuart pointed out a single glyph on the round surface of an altar. "We can't decipher it, because this is

the only known instance of the glyph." He stared at the anthropomorphic carving and muttered, half to himself, "I know it's a verb." Why? "Because it comes right after the date, and right before a name."

The place is called Dos Pilas. Stuart is part of a multidisciplinary Vanderbilt team headed by Professor Arthur Demarest, whose six-year investigation of sites near the Pasión River represents one of the most ambitious Mayan field projects under way. The team has made spectacular finds, including a previously unknown ruin on a peninsula jutting into a lake. The ruin is guarded by a moat forty feet deep, whose unusual structure promises to revise ideas of Mayan warfare.

Dos Pilas is not an easy place to work. To get to it you must drive two hours on a bone-jarring rut of a road to Sayaxché (a frontier town out of Conrad), ride for ninety minutes in an outboard-powered canoe up a tributary of the Pasión, and then hike for three hours through the jungle. In December of 1989 an overeager Dutch tourist died of heat exhaustion in the course of this hike; the locals who hauled his body out left a cross made of mule bones as a *memento mori*. The rain forest here is lush and steamy, full of the cries of exotic animals and insects. Wander a few feet off the trail, and you may easily get lost. A year ago a scientist and his Guatemalan guide spent nine hours, without water, lost in this wilderness. Before they managed to reorient themselves, they stumbled upon a previously unknown Mayan cave, chock-full of sacred ritual pottery.

The Vanderbilt base camp is near a stronghold of Guatemalan guerrillas, who for the past sixteen years have waged a bitter war against one government after another. Even as Stuart read the stelae to me, a gun battle that cost several lives was taking place a few miles away. The rain forest here abounds with snakes, including the deadly fer-de-lance; for all work off the trail, team members must wear fiberglass leggings, which have already saved the life of one Dos Pilas laborer. Shortly before my visit a dig at Río Azul, to the northeast, had to be shut down after a Guatemalan worker was bitten by a fer-de-lance. Rushed to the hospital, he had had his leg amputated, and barely survived.

But Dos Pilas is an epigrapher's delight. Only a month before my visit the Vanderbilt team had unearthed a hieroglyphic stairway, a series of broad stone steps with pristine glyphs carved on the risers. Remarkably, a wall of prehistoric rubble runs perpendicularly across the inscriptions. Nothing like such a juxtaposition has ever before been found at a Mayan site. Demarest believes that the hastily built wall, which encircles Dos Pilas, is evidence of a desperate late stage of occupancy. For centuries before that stage, a stylized combat fought largely by kings and chosen warriors had kept the balance of power among dozens of rival city-states in a precarious equilibrium. Death and destruction were held to a minimum. If Demarest is right, near the end of the Classic Period the

rules governing that combat broke down; warfare began to involve full-scale attacks on cities, devastation of agricultural fields, and far more killing and death. The rubble wall at Dos Pilas bespeaks the terror of a people in fear of annihilation.

Stuart paused before the staircase, from which, within a few weeks, the rubble wall would be carefully removed. Summarizing the visible glyphs, he said, "Ruler One put this up. It has to do with a war against Tikal. All the really interesting part—the who, what, and where—is under the rubble. All we've got now is the when."

Among the eight or ten epigraphers who are in the van-

a family trip to archaeological sites all over Mexico. Later, at age eight, he sat mesmerized at the Mayan site Cobá, staring at glyphs and at the drawings epigraphers had made of them.

"I was absorbed even then by the visual complexity of the glyphs," Stuart says drily. He presented his first paper at age twelve. Its title, "Some Thoughts on Certain Occurrences of the T565 Glyph Element at Palenque," already bore the stamp of reticence that has come to be his trademark. "Early on," Linda Schele says, "people wanted to dismiss what David was doing, because he was so young."



A lintel (left), possibly from El Cayo, in Mexico, dating back to the late eighth century A.D.; and a stela from the mid-seventh century A.D. (right) from Dos Pilas, in Guatemala. The figure on the lintel is a woman wearing the long outer garment known as a huipil. In her hand she holds God K, whose presence reveals the woman's high birth

guard of Maya decipherment, David Stuart is generally conceded to be the most talented. Demarest, his faculty adviser at Vanderbilt, says, "All the others have to work incredibly hard to make a decipherment. David just seems to do it effortlessly. I've been there when he's read an inscription just as it's been brushed off for the first time."

Indeed, though he would blush at the analogy, Stuart seems to be a kind of Mozart of epigraphy. The son of Mayan archaeologists, he grew up surrounded by glyphs and potsherds. "The joke," a colleague says, "is that one of David's first words was Dzibilchaltún"—the name of the dig in the Yucatán where his father was working when David was an infant. Stuart's earliest memory is of

At eighteen Stuart received a five-year MacArthur "genius" grant; he is the youngest person yet to have been so honored. The media bombarded him with the kind of attention normally lavished on movie stars and athletes, an experience that still makes him wince. "I don't like the term 'whiz kid,'" he says softly. The wonder is that Stuart did not develop a celebrity's ego. "The MacArthur could have been very unhealthy for him," says Stuart's closest colleague, Stephen Houston, a professor at Vanderbilt. "I give a lot of credit to David's parents. They're very down-to-earth people."

At the time of the Spanish conquest, astonishingly, the Maya were still writing glyphs—not on stone stelae but in handmade books. A treatise written by Friar Diego de

Landa in the Yucatán in 1566 contains a passage that haunts every Mayanist:

These people also used certain characters or letters, with which they wrote in their books about the antiquities and their sciences. . . . We found a great number of books in these letters, and since they contained nothing but superstitions and falsehoods of the devil we burned them all, which they took most grievously, and which gave them great pain.

The Mayan books were made of long pieces of fig-bark paper, plastered with gesso and folded screen-fashion, like the bellows of an accordion; the covers were made of jaguar skin. The "letters" were drawn by master scribes in black and red paint, with fine-haired brushes. The manuscripts that Landa and his fellow Franciscans burned bore the exquisite calligraphy of a tradition at least a millennium and a half old.

Not all the Mayan books vanished in the fires. Some of them found their way to Europe as part of the Royal Fifth, the share of booty that Cortés sent to Charles V. The fig-paper books were puzzled over by scholars in Seville and Valladolid, and Albrecht Dürer may have seen them in Brussels. But Europeans could make nothing of these strange productions. Over the years their fragile paper crumbled into dust, and many were likely thrown out as trash. By the nineteenth century, when Mayan writing was rediscovered, fragments of only three books survived in Europe, one each in Dresden, Paris, and Madrid.

This trio of texts, along with the stelae rediscovered by Stephens and Catherwood, were all that scholars had to work with when they began to puzzle over Mayan writing, in the 1840s. By then the direct descendants of the builders of Copán and Chichén Itzá and Tikal had completely lost the knowledge of how to read the glyphs. The murderous Spanish conquest had claimed the life of virtually every member of the elite class, probably the only Maya who could write.

A few secrets of the language were solved early, such as the Mayan number system, the workings of the culture's dazzlingly precise calendar, and the glyphs for certain gods and animals. But for half a century after 1900, work on the decipherment of Mayan glyphs remained virtually stalled, despite the concerted efforts of a succession of brilliant scholars. The basic structure of the writing proved so intractable that as late as 1960 the script re-

mained, in the words of one expert, "mute and unread." Some of the best minds in Mayan studies despaired of further progress; many agreed with Paul Schellhas that the writing would never be deciphered.

In general, steady progress on undeciphered scripts is by no means inevitable. From the Etruscans, who lived in Tuscany before the Romans, we have some 10,000 inscriptions, perhaps twice as many as we have from the Maya. Yet only a few Etruscan words can be read. In the early 1950s, when an amateur epigrapher named Michael Ventris deciphered Linear B, the ancient Mycenaean language discovered in Crete, his feat made headlines. A

parallel script found on neighboring tablets, Linear A, the Minoan language of Crete, remains uncomprehended. Iberian, the pre-Roman writing from Spain; Sinaitic, an apparent precursor of Hebrew; Archaic Sumerian, the earliest written language in the world; Mohenjo-Daro, from the Indus Valley; futhark runes, from Scandinavia; Elamite, from Iran; the very earliest Egyptian hieroglyphics—all these and other major writing systems remain undeciphered, with no breakthroughs in sight. In the case of Rongorongo, found on wooden tablets from Easter Island, experts cannot even agree on whether the characters are a true language or simply a set of mnemonic symbols used to remind singers of ritual chants.

With only hints from the hieroglyphs, the archaeologists influenced by Sylvanus Morley and Eric Thompson sketched out their compelling portrait of the peaceful, priest-ruled, time-obsessed Maya. In 1950 Thompson summed up his view of Mayan writing in a famous passage:

I conceive the endless progress of time as the supreme mystery of

Maya religion, a subject which pervaded Maya thought to an extent without parallel in the history of mankind. In such a setting there was no place for personal records, for, in relation to the vastness of time, man and his doings shrink to insignificance. To add details of war or peace, of marriage or giving in marriage, to the solemn roll call of the periods of time is as though a tourist were to carve his initials on Donatello's David.

Younger scholars today tend to snicker at the Morley-Thompson notion of the pacific, calendar-happy Maya. Linda Schele and her co-author Mary Miller write, "The Maya were considered the Greeks of the New World, and the Aztecs were seen as Romans—one pure, original and beautiful, the other slavish, derivative and cold." But,

THE SON OF MAYAN AR-
CHAEOLOGISTS, STUART
GREW UP SURROUNDED BY
GLYPHS AND POTSDERDS.
HE PRESENTED HIS FIRST
PAPER AT AGE TWELVE. ITS
TITLE, "SOME THOUGHTS ON
CERTAIN OCCURRENCES OF
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PALENQUE," ALREADY BORE
THE STAMP OF RETICENCE
THAT HAS COME TO BE HIS
TRADEMARK.



snake



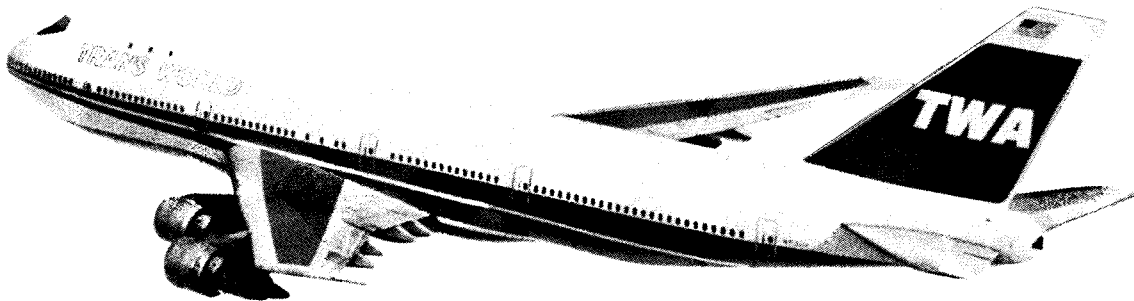
fourteen



Tikal

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like other pioneers later proved wrong, Morley and Thompson made reasonable inferences from limited data. The ancient Maya, we now know, were an exceedingly aggressive and warlike people: in Schele's pithy phrase, "blood was the mortar" of their society. "Man and his doings" were of paramount interest to them—so much so that the stelae boast vaingloriously about the great deeds rulers performed. Rather than living in a huge empire like Rome's, the Maya were spread across a balkanized land of feuding peoples, like the West of the Native Americans before the white man came.

The Fruit of Early Efforts

THE HALLMARK OF MAYAN ART IS INTRICACY OF ornamentation. The designers of the stelae—and of carved jade plaques and wooden lintels, incised bones and seashells, painted murals and pots—abhorred blank space. The term "baroque" has often been invoked. To the naive eye Mayan

HONEY

Only calmness will reassure
the bees to let you rob their hoard.
Any sweat of fear provokes them.
Approach with confidence, and from
the side, not shading their entrance.
And hush smoke gently from the spout
of the pot of rags, for sparks will
anger them. If you go near bees
every day they will know you.
And never jerk or turn so quick
you excite them. If weeds are trimmed
around the hive they have access
and feel free. When they taste your smoke
they fill themselves with honey and
are laden and lazy as you
lift the lid to let in daylight.
No bee full of sweetness wants to
sting. Resist greed. With the top off
you touch the fat gold frames, each cell
a hex perfect as a snowflake,
a sealed relic of sun and time
and roots of many acres fixed
in crystal-tight arrays, in rows
and lattices of sweeter latin
from scattered prose of meadow, woods.

—Robert Morgan

iconography has the dazzling but unfathomable busyness of, say, the stuccoed walls of the Moorish Alhambra.

The same crowded richness of detail characterizes Mayan writing. Each hieroglyph occupies a pre-allotted cubicle on the stone's surface; we know from unfinished inscriptions that the carver blocked out a grid of squares before filling in the words. The glyphs are arranged in pairs of vertical columns, which the ancient Maya read left to right, top to bottom.

The only readily accessible feature of Mayan glyphs is the number system, which a tourist can master after a week of looking at monuments. The Maya used a system based on the number twenty, with only three symbols: a bar for five, a dot for one, and a stylized shell for zero. Neither the Greeks nor the Romans were able to conceive of zero and use it as the basis of a numerical place system, an intellectual discovery with profound consequences for cultures that made it. In the Old World only the Hindus or perhaps the Babylonians before them made this breakthrough. The Mayan discovery of zero was obviously independent of the Hindu or Babylonian.

At the time of the Spanish conquest, the immensely elaborate Mayan calendar was still being used by astrologer-priests to divine the future and meditate upon the past. Thanks to that fact, Mayan dates can be precisely correlated with the Gregorian calendar. On most stelae the hieroglyphic inscription begins with the date of the stone's dedication, recorded in a five-number sequence called the Long Count. Thus we know, for instance, that Stela 11 at Piedras Negras, Guatemala, was dedicated on August 22, A.D. 731.

The earliest firmly dated Mayan monument is Stela 29 at Tikal, with a date of A.D. 292. The most recent monument date yet found is A.D. 909. This span of 600-plus years covers the golden age of Mayan culture, when most of the great cities were built. Indeed, one definition of the Classic Period is the age during which monuments were dated by the Long Count.

By working backward, scholars figured out that the Mayan calendar numbered from a Day Zero—August 13, 3114 B.C. This was considered the beginning not of the world, however, but only of the current cycle of a perhaps infinitely ancient universe. Their flexible number system allowed the Maya to conjure with unimaginably distant dates. A stela at Quiriguá is inscribed with a date 400 million years in the past. What this means, nobody knows.

Around A.D. 900 the most advanced civilization the New World had ever seen suddenly collapsed. The causes of this breakdown constitute the greatest unsolved problem that Mayanists confront. After A.D. 909 the Maya erected no more carved stelae that have been found and seem to have raised few new temples, let alone cities, except in the northern Yucatán, at such sites as Chichén Itzá and Tulum.

By the 1540s, owing to the ruthlessness of the conquis-

tadors, the Maya in the Yucatán and the Guatemalan highlands had submitted to Spanish rule. One group, however, the proud and canny Itzá, retreated to a fabled lake deep in the Petén, a jungle wilderness in northern Guatemala, where they built an island capital called Tayasal. For a century and a half Spanish expeditions thrust inland toward Tayasal; some explorers met their deaths in Itzá ambushes. But finally, in the period 1695–1697, the Spaniards reached the lake and conquered Tayasal.

The pivotal figure in this conquest was Padre Andres de Avendaño y Loyola, one of the most extraordinary men ever to appear in Spanish America. Avendaño turned the tide of Itzá resistance by convincing the defenders of Tayasal, to their astonishment, that their own calendrical prophecies predicted a major upheaval in 1696. He was able to perform this feat because, unique among Europeans, he had learned to read Mayan hieroglyphs. Avendaño's brief account of the conquest of Tayasal alludes to another treatise he had written, explaining the decipherment; this book, alas, is lost to history.

As late as the beginning of the eighteenth century a few Mayan sages (and one Franciscan friar) could still read the glyphs. But the tradition of literacy among the Maya was utterly severed by the annihilation of the elite class, completed at Tayasal, and today knowledge of the glyphs among the Maya is extinct.

The Landa Treatise and Further Developments

WITHOUT THE ROSETTA STONE, CHAMPOLION could not have deciphered Egyptian hieroglyphs. The closest thing to a Rosetta Stone for Mayan glyphs comes on a single page of a treatise written by Diego de Landa, the book-burning friar. Called before a Spanish court to defend his harsh treatment of the Maya, Landa wrote his *Relación de*

las cosas de Yucatán in 1566. Lost for centuries, the book was rediscovered by a Flemish priest in the 1860s. According to its English translator, William Gates, 99 percent of what we know about the Maya at the time of the conquest derives from Landa.

One day in Mérida, Landa asked one of the last literate Maya, a man named Gaspar Antonio Chi, to write down the Mayan "alphabet" in glyphs. With the inevitable naiveté of a sixteenth-century European, Landa assumed that the basic building blocks of Maya were alphabetic letters, as is the case in Spanish and all other European languages. Ancient Maya, however—like Chinese, an-

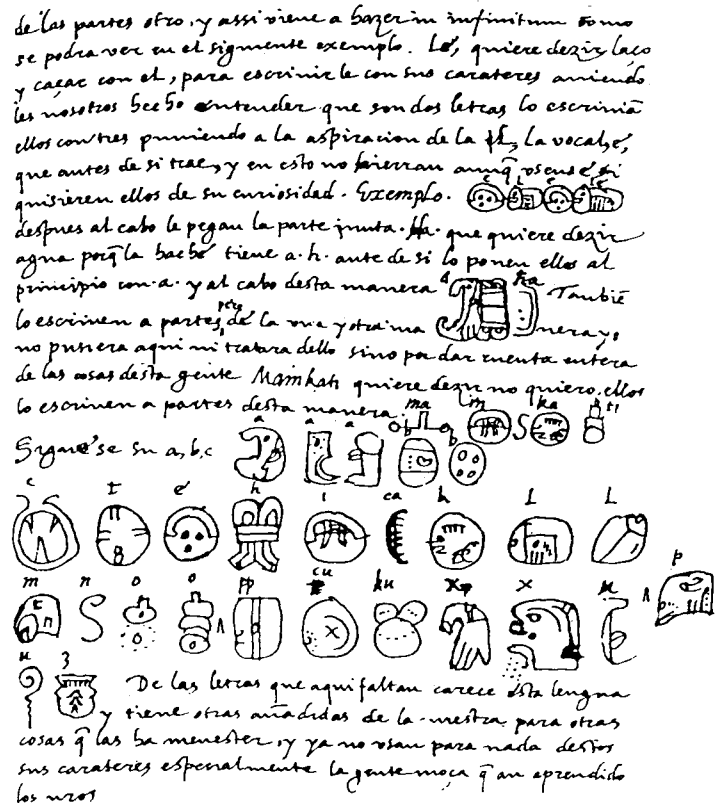
cient Egyptian, and many other languages—has no alphabet: the very concept of a letter is foreign to it.

Gaspar Antonio may have tried to explain this fact to Landa, but the friar could not understand: all languages, he assumed, had alphabets. Grumbling as he performed the task, the Mayan gave Landa something similar to an alphabet but crucially different. Four centuries would intervene before scholars could discover exactly what Gaspar Antonio had delivered to the demanding Franciscan.

In the meantime, as they pored over the intricate glyphs, students of the lost language tacitly made a pivotal but erroneous assumption. The glyphs look like stylized pictures: you can see a

jaguar's head here, a bird's foot there, a human profile elsewhere. More-abstract glyphs, it was assumed, were pictures that had been simplified and stylized over the centuries. The erroneous assumption was that Maya was a purely logographic language: that is, each glyph stood for a word.

The first real breakthrough came in 1952, in the work of an obscure Soviet linguist named Yuri Knorosov. Pondering Landa's alphabet, he became convinced that the glyphs Gaspar Antonio had drawn represented neither letters (as Landa thought) nor words (as all Mayan scholars assumed) but *syllables*. Landa had asked his informant to draw the letter *B*, but he must have pronounced the letter *beh*, as the Spanish do. Gaspar Antonio, then, had written what Knorosov guessed—correctly—was the



A page from Diego de Landa's *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*, which helped scholars crack the Mayan code

glyph for the Mayan syllable *beh*. In a *tour de force* of reasoning, Knorosov made a number of phonetic decipherments. For instance, Knorosov showed that a glyph already suspected of meaning “turkey” was a compound of two syllabic glyphs, *ku* and *tzu*. In a dictionary of modern Yucatec Maya, Knorosov found “turkey” glossed as *kutz*. (Today’s Maya speak at least thirty-one different languages, most of them mutually unintelligible. A few, including Chol and Yucatec, turn out to resemble closely the written language of the ancient Maya.)

Most Western Mayanists refused to accept Knorosov’s radical notion that the glyphs were in part phonetic. The Russian’s work, unfortunately, was riddled with wild errors, as well as insightful discoveries, and filled with sneering Marxist-Leninist rhetoric. Knorosov had never seen a Mayan site. Instead, he had analyzed facsimiles of the three surviving Mayan books in Europe. Eric Thompson, with a sneering rhetoric of his own, ridiculed Knorosov into limbo. During the 1950s and 1960s only a couple of Mayanists kept the Russian’s seminal premise alive.

In 1958 a Mexican scholar, Heinrich Berlin, announced another major discovery. By examining similar glyphs in scores of different contexts, he deduced that a certain kind of glyph must refer either to a place (a Mayan city) or to its ruling dynasty. These signposts he called emblem glyphs. They were the first strong hint that, contra Thompson, the inscriptions were not limited to “the endless progress of time.” The coup de grace to Thompson’s theory came at the hands of a colleague at the Carnegie Institution, in Washington. In 1960 Tatiana Proskouriakoff, after mulling over dates from seven sets of stelae at Piedras Negras, pointed out that within each set all the dates fit into a human lifespan, and that the span of dates in a set often overlapped those in one or two other sets. She concluded that the inscriptions recorded not astronomical musings but the births, enthronements, and deaths of kings and their heirs. The evidence Proskouriakoff marshaled was overwhelming, and proved that Mayan inscriptions were primarily historical.

According to Peter Mathews, of the University of Calgary, who had the story from Proskouriakoff herself, she walked down the hall and gave the manuscript of her groundbreaking paper to Thompson, then the most respected Mayanist in the world. He glanced at the argument and told her that it couldn’t possibly be true. The

next day he handed the paper back to her, saying, “You’re absolutely right.” To his credit, Thompson acknowledged Proskouriakoff’s discovery in print, even though it contradicted much of his life’s work.

The Dual Role of Glyphs

DECIPHERMENT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A GREAT field for amateurs. Champollion was an unemployed history teacher, Michael Ventris an architect. Proskouriakoff also trained as an architect.

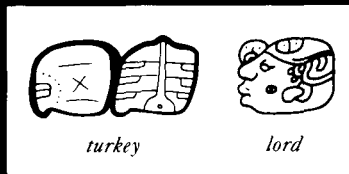
Even today, amid the collaborative ferment of Maya decipherment, prescribing the ideal training for an epigrapher would be difficult. According to one of the best, a twenty-seven-year-old German from the University of Bonn named Nikolai Grube, “A good epigrapher needs to have excellent training in linguistics, needs to know both Chol and Yucatec Maya, and should know Spanish well. He must also have an excellent visual memory.” Grube taught himself cuneiform writing and David Stuart learned Chinese, each to aid his work in Maya. Yet some of today’s decipherment stars do not fit Grube’s formula. Linda Schele, for example, was teaching studio art in Alabama when she went as a tourist to Palenque, where the riddle of the Maya caused her to plunge passionately into a new career.

Some uncanny mixture of intuitive insight and logical clarity seems to animate the best epigraphers. The field has become highly technical, yet computers play almost no part in it. By now about 800 different Mayan glyphs have been identified. A good epigrapher not only knows all 800 by heart but knows virtually every context in which each appears. Several months

ago Stuart walked into the museum at Tikal and saw a photo of a looted artifact recently recovered by Guatemalan authorities. He stared, mesmerized, at the photo, and murmured, “This is too much. See that jaguar in the center? It’s actually a glyph—the name of someone. It occurs at Piedras Negras and at Yaxchilán.” Stuart carries in his head a card catalogue of thousands of different Mayan texts, which he flips through effortlessly to find the previous appearances of a single glyph.

To make a new decipherment, someone like Stuart essentially marshals a series of “if-then” syllogisms, drawing upon the known texts in Mayan books and on stelae, pots, and lintels. If this glyph is a verb, then it will appear just before a glyph that is a noun (word order is not the

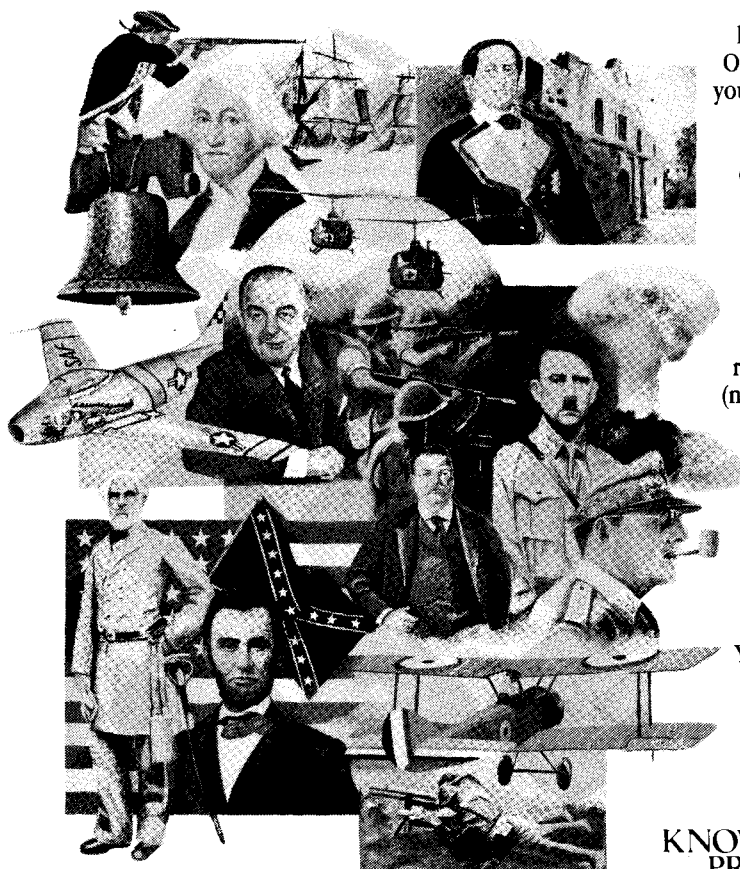
THE CAUSES OF THE LATE-CLASSIC COLLAPSE REMAIN AN ENIGMA. “THEY WERE WORRIED ABOUT WAR AT THE END,” SCHELE SAYS. “ECOLOGICAL DISASTERS, TOO. DEFORESTATION. STARVATION. I THINK THE POPULATION ROSE TO THE LIMIT THE TECHNOLOGY COULD BEAR. THEY WERE SO CLOSE TO THE EDGE, IF ANYTHING WENT WRONG, IT WAS ALL OVER.”



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same in Maya as it is in English). If the glyph on one stela refers to the accompanying picture of a king, then what does it tell us that the same glyph is associated with a different picture on another stela? And so on. Even a simple decipherment is difficult to explain to a lay reader, so thorny and subtle is the chain of reasoning. Nearly all decipherments are at first tentative, and many fail the test of further verification. Yet when a decipherment clicks, it unleashes a tide of corroboration. These are the moments an epigrapher lives for.

No single discovery in the past twenty years has had the impact of Knorosov's, Berlin's, and Proskouriakoff's

teen) possible syllables. The challenge for epigraphers is to identify the glyph that stands for each of those ninety-five syllables. So far, for example, the glyphs for *cha*, *che*, *chi*, and *chu* have been identified, but *cho* is still out there on the loose. Every year epigraphers nail down a few more syllable glyphs, and by now the syllabary is more than half full.

Mayan glyphs can be either logographic or phonetic—that is, they can stand either for a word or for a syllable. In Maya you can often write a word in two different ways, by giving the unique logograph for the word or by “spelling it out” in syllables. The great power of a phonetic de-



A piece of the Grolier Codex (left), one of the few Mayan documents that survived the Spanish bonfires. The limestone panel (right) depicts events that, by our calendrical system, began on August 23, A.D. 783—this according to the glyphs beside the seated ruler. The ruler is being presented with captives who have undergone ritual bloodletting and will eventually be killed

great intuitive leaps. Progress has come in thousands of tiny increments. The approach that has yielded the most vivid results is the search for glyphs that represent phonetic syllables. It is reasonable to assume that ancient Maya was composed of the same nineteen consonant sounds and five vowel sounds as the several Mayan languages spoken today that closely resemble it. This hypothesis allows scholars to construct what they call a syllabary—a chart of all the possible syllables in the language.

The *ch* sound in Maya, for instance, matched with the five vowel sounds (*a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*), produces five syllables, sounded as *cha*, *che*, *chi*, *cho*, and *chu*. In ancient Maya there should be a total of ninety-five (five times nine-

cipherment is that it tells us not only what the word means but also—if the assumption about enduring pronunciation is correct—how it sounded in the seventh century. For some time now epigraphers have recognized the glyphs that identify most of the rulers of Tikal. To refer to these ancient despots, they make up names like Curl Nose and Stormy Sky and Shield Skull. Such nicknames are playful shorthand descriptions of the glyphs: the glyph for one of the men who reigned over Tikal in the seventh century looks like a design conjoining a shield and a skull. We have no idea, however, how the Maya pronounced the glyph we refer to as Shield Skull. But when David Kelley, of the University of Calgary, discovered that a ruler of Palenque whom epigraphers had

dubbed Hand Shield was also named in phonetic glyphs, Kelley learned that the ruler's people had called him Pacal. For the first time the true name of a Mayan king was revealed to us.

Though late in life Eric Thompson reluctantly granted the historicity of Mayan inscriptions, he never accepted phoneticism; he refused to believe that glyphs could represent syllables as well as whole words. Surprisingly, both Berlin and Proskouriakoff balked on the same question. Shortly before he died, Berlin told Linda Schele, "I must admit that it works. But I'm too old to learn all this new stuff."

The quest for decipherments is made infinitely more difficult by the huge variability of the Mayan scripts. One problem is to recognize stylistic differences between carvers or scribes—in the way that a reader of English can recognize the same word in two quite different specimens of handwriting. But the ancient Maya loved to play with language for its own sake. Any given glyph may appear, as Schele points out, "in either abstract or personified form, which in turn can be either anthropomorphic or zoomorphic and in head or full figure form." On top of this, each glyph-square may contain as many as nine signs, and the curlicues and squiggles that hang like barnacles on the most prominent sign may be affixes that modify its meaning or they may be independent signs, made to appear subordinate just because the Mayan carver liked the looks of it that way.

Written Maya has been revealed to be grammatically and syntactically rich and strange. The normal word order is verb-object-subject, as if we said, "Wrote the book he." The language boasts such nuances as tense and aspect, multiple affixes, and a pattern called the ergative, in which the choice of pronoun depends on the transitivity of the verb. To make matters even knottier, the Maya were demon punsters.

What We Now Know About the Maya

EPIGRAPHERS ARE FREQUENTLY ASKED WHAT PERCENTAGE of the Mayan glyphs have been deciphered. The question itself is ill defined. Often epigraphers have a good idea of a glyph's meaning; they can say something like "This glyph means birth." But the ultimate goal of decipherment is to be able to understand the glyphs as the Maya did. To use ancient Greek as an analogy, we want not only to know the story of Odysseus's return to Ithaca but also to be able to read every line of the *Odyssey* out loud. "For about seventy-five percent of the glyphs we have an idea what the Maya were talking about," Nikolai Grube says. "But so far we can read and pronounce only about forty percent as the Maya did." David Stuart makes an even lower estimate: around 25 or 30 percent.

How has the partial decipherment transformed our understanding of the Classic Maya? One must preface any

answer with a caveat. In burning the invaluable fig-paper books the Franciscans committed an unforgivable crime. As Kathryn Josserand, a Florida State University Mayanist, says, "Imagine what future archaeologists would know of American life if they had only the inscriptions on monuments in Washington, D.C." The texts on the best Mayan stelae, to be sure, are rich and eloquent. The three Mayan books in European libraries are all concerned with ritual astronomical matters. We know, however, from Spanish accounts, that Mayan books also dealt with history, genealogy, songs, prophecies, and what the friars called science. The Quiché Maya epic the *Popol Vuh*, which was written in highland Guatemala in the 1550s by bards whom the friars had taught to write in Maya transliterated into roman letters, is a mythic narrative so powerful and poetic that it magnifies the tragedy of the lost literature.

In 1971 a fig-paper book appeared out of nowhere at an exhibit at the Grolier Club in New York. How it got there remains a murky business, but most students believe that the book was retrieved from a dry cave in Chiapas by a looter and sold to a Mexican collector. Several authorities, including Thompson and the Mexican government, thought the Grolier Codex a fake, but it has since been carbon-dated to A.D. 1230 and proved genuine. Unfortunately, this fourth known Mayan book is in bad shape, and what can be read of it concerns only calculations of the cycle of Venus.

Limited though the carved inscriptions may be, epigraphers have wrung from them knowledge that immeasurably deepens, even revolutionizes, our grasp of the Classic Maya. Perhaps most important, the glyphs appear to lay to rest for good the Morley-Thompson notion of a peaceful, contemplative civilization. On the evidence, the Maya were every bit as bloody and warlike as the Aztecs. Their rulers validated their reigns and celebrated the completion of time cycles through ritual bloodletting: kings pierced their penises with stingray spines, queens ran barbed ropes through holes in their tongues. Graphic depictions of these gruesome rites appear on monuments that were known by the nineteenth century, but Mayanists, influenced by conventional wisdom, resisted their implications. What we now believe to be dripping blood, they saw as water. In 1899 the pioneering investigator Alfred Maudslay published a drawing of a Yaxchilán lintel which deliberately omitted the tongue-rasping rope with which a queen mutilated herself.

Gone, too, with the new decipherment, is any vestige of Morley's Old and New empires. The Maya apparently never confederated; they always lived in feuding city-states, and their stelae repeatedly celebrate the victories of one over another. At least until the last century and a half before the collapse, warfare was a highly stylized business.

One of the great mysteries of the Classic Period was a span of roughly 160 years that has come to be called the

Tikal Hiatus. Archaeologists had observed that at Tikal, the greatest of all Mayan cities, no monuments were raised from A.D. 534 to 690. The cause of that gap remained a matter for conjecture until 1986. Working in a ball court at Caracol, a site in Belize some forty miles southeast of Tikal, Diane and Arlen Chase, of the University of Central Florida, unearthed a pristine glyph-covered altar. Diane ran back to camp to get Stephen Houston, the project epigrapher. Reading the altar, Houston found that it documented Caracol's victory over Tikal in 562, and its subsequent 140 years of domination over its grander neighbor.

As Nikolai Grube puts it, "Nobody had ever believed that Tikal, this great city, could have been defeated by anyone else." The Chases and Houston's discovery is one of the triumphs of Mayan epigraphy. A major war and conquest, otherwise lost to archaeology, became known through one reading of glyphs, and with that reading one of the chief puzzles about the Classic Period was solved.

At the best-documented sites epigraphers have been able to put together dynastic sequences of kings. From A.D. 292 to 869 at Tikal, we have a well-dated roster of twenty-seven rulers, twenty-three of whose name-glyphs we can recognize. More and more, the personalities of some of these jungle despots emerge. As Linda Schele has written,

The ancient Maya have become a historical people. . . . Perhaps one day the names of . . . Pacal of Palenque, Yax-Pac of Copán and Ah Cacaw of Tikal will take their place next to the names of Ramses of Egypt, Darius of Persia and Perikles of Athens, as we teach our children the history of the world.

On a number of important matters the inscriptions shed no light. They tell us nothing whatsoever about the Mayan economy and trade, subjects that linger in a lacuna of ignorance. On the other hand, decipherment has begun to penetrate some of the more sophisticated corners of ancient Mayan thought. In a landmark 1989 paper Stuart and Houston demonstrated that an oft-occurring glyph, catalogued as T539, was pronounced *way* and alluded to the Mesoamerican notion of a "co-essence," "an animal or celestial phenomenon . . . that is believed to share in the consciousness of the person who 'owns' it." This powerful decipherment implies that many of the supernatural figures that used to be called "gods" or "underworld denizens" by iconographers are rather to be thought of as mystic doppelgängers to Mayan heroes.

Stuart and Houston were also the first to find Mayan toponyms, glyphs that unequivocally name geographic places. Stuart showed that the toponym for Aguateca was a pictographic rendering of "sun-faced split mountain"—a perfect description of the eastward-looking site, which is cleft by a deep crevice in the rock. Stuart made this reading without ever having visited Aguateca. In a comparable flash of insight, he not only identified the top-

onym of a site on a lake in the Petén but also discovered a phonetic rendering of the toponym which he could read as Yax-há, which means "Green Water." Strikingly, today's Maya still call the site Yaxhá. Never before had an epigrapher showed that a Mayan place-name had remained stable for nearly 2,000 years.

For the foreseeable future epigraphers are unlikely to run out of mysteries to ponder. The causes of the late-Classic collapse—a calamity as sudden and as far-reaching as the fall of Rome—remain an enigma. Because monument-carving ceased—as far as we know—after A.D. 909, we may never have a revealing record of that Mesoamerican apocalypse. "I'll tell you what they were worried about," Schele says. "They were worried about war at the end. Ecological disasters, too. Deforestation. Starvation. I think the population rose to the limit the technology could bear. They were so close to the edge, if anything went wrong, it was all over." Yet Schele's theory remains only an educated guess.

Other essential mysteries make epigraphers salivate: How and why did Mayan writing develop? Why was the system successful for so long? How did the Mayan economy work? How did Mayan civilization differ from one site to another? Were the gods of Bonampak, for instance, worshiped also at Copán? How much did the Maya know about the rest of the world?

One of the burning questions at the moment is the extent to which writing systems other than the Mayan developed in the New World. In 1986 a barefoot fisherman waded into a swampy river in Veracruz, far to the northwest of the Mayan domain. Stepping on a flat stone slab, he was surprised to feel complicated patterns under his toes. When the slab was hauled out of the river, experts were astonished to find a finely carved stela, with twenty-one columns of hieroglyphs. More astonishing was the fact that the glyphs were not Mayan. The carvers, however, had recorded a pair of Long Count dates that could be read as A.D. 143 and 156—earlier than any known Mayan monument.

The finding of the La Mojarra stela, as it is called, is "a fabulous thing," David Stuart says. "I think it will prove to be one of the milestone discoveries of the last fifty years." Maya was long considered the only true writing system to have developed in the New World. Now we know that another written language, perhaps belonging to the Olmec people, developed more or less independently. Some 400 glyphs are discernible on the stela. Simply on the basis of their variety Grube speculates that the La Mojarra language may have fewer signs than Maya, and may thus represent an even more phonetic, less logographic system. But unless many more carved stones are found in Veracruz, the glyphs will probably never be read. □

CREDITS: All but one of the photographs in this article are the work of Justin Kerr. The picture on the right on page 91 is by Matthew Hale. The glyph drawings are by S. D. Houston.

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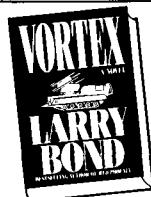
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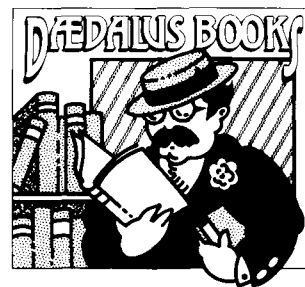
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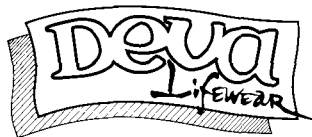
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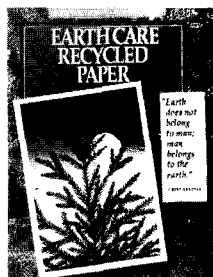
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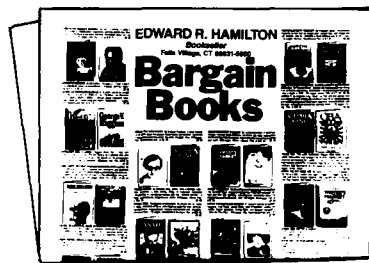
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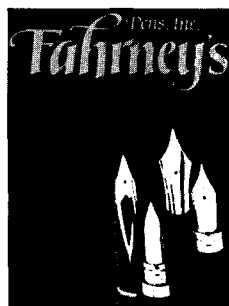
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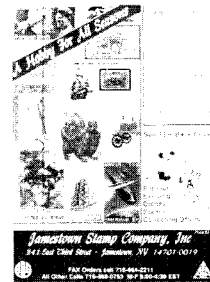
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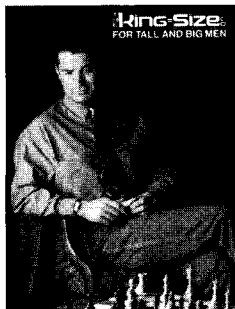
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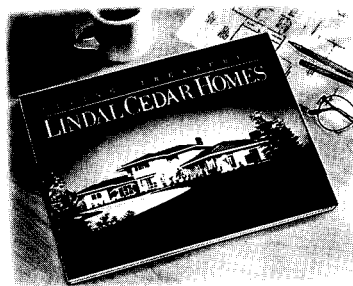
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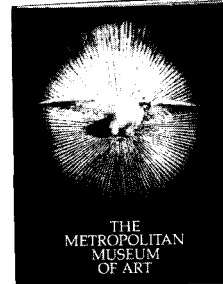
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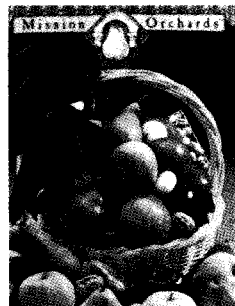
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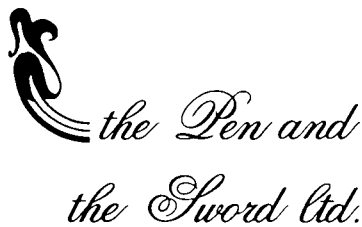
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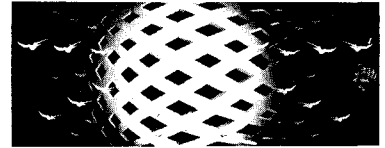


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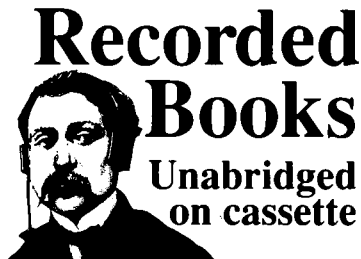
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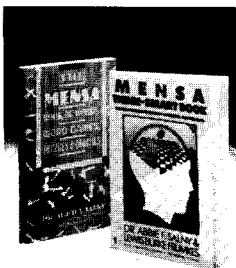
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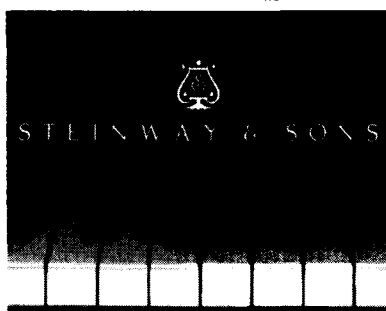
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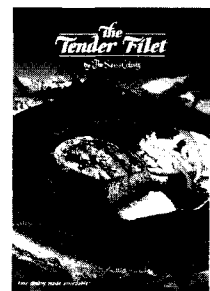
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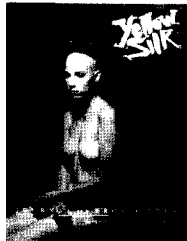
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Music



Better With Age

At eighty-four, Benny Carter is at the height of his musical powers

by Francis Davis

JAZZ IS ENDURING what appears to be a mid-life crisis. As in people, the telltale symptom is a drooling infatuation with youth. It all began with the success of Wynton Marsalis, who was just twenty when he released his first album, in 1982. Overlooking the fact that musicians as talented as Marsalis are rare at any age, the major record labels have been signing untested young instrumentalists in the hope that lightning will strike twice. Not surprisingly, given the promotional effort of which these labels are capable, these young musicians are virtually the only

jazz performers now receiving any notice. They are being treated as such a novelty that it's becoming difficult to remember that jazz was once assumed to *require* the vigor of youth.

For a reminder of the way things used to be, I recently reread an essay called "Why Do They Age So Badly?," by the late French critic and composer André Hodeir. (Written sometime in the 1950s, it was included in Hodeir's 1962 collection *Toward Jazz*, translated by Noel Burch.) Lamenting that what lay ahead for any jazz musician who reached middle age having achieved

some degree of recognition was "an unremitting decline, an inevitable subsidence into complacency," Hodeir argued that "jazz has one thing in common with sports: it requires its performers . . . to be in first-rate physical condition." But whereas "the aging athlete is *obliged* to retire" (Hodeir's italics), jazz audiences permit older musicians to go on suiting up, as it were, until they drop. Hodeir cited as an example of fans reluctant to "repudiate their traditional idols" a Parisian audience that responded worshipfully to the trumpeter Roy Eldridge in 1950, "when he was already well on the decline."

In 1950 Eldridge was all of thirty-nine, with at least twenty-five more years of crackling solos ahead of him. What has aged badly is Hodeir's argument, although in fairness it should be acknowledged that he was one of the first to write about jazz with such candor, and that his essay dates from a period when bebop—then considered the ultimate in modernity—must have made the mature accomplishments of swing-era veterans like Eldridge seem a little passé. Reading "Why Do They Age So Badly?" in 1991, I find myself wondering what Hodeir would make of the alto saxophonist Benny Carter, who turned eighty-four last month, and whose powers as an improviser remain miraculously unimpaired.

The perseverance of elderly musicians is an open invitation to sentimentality, and Carter long ago reached the age at which an instrumentalist elicits admiration merely for playing, no matter how shakily. But I really do believe that Carter, who aside from Lionel Hampton is the last surviving major figure of the 1930s, is still making vibrant contributions to jazz six decades later. In so doing, he offers present-day audiences a singular thrill—the chance to look back on history as it continues to unfold.

CARTER HAS BEEN around practically forever. Although the standard discographies show him to have made his recording debut with Charlie Johnson's Paradise Orchestra, in 1928, Carter himself remembers participating in a session with the blues singer Clara Smith four years earlier. His first recorded arrangement (of "P.D.Q. Blues," for Fletcher Henderson) was written in 1927, the same year

he published his first composition ("Nobody Knows," co-written with Fats Waller). After working as a sideman with Henderson and Chick Webb, and serving as music director of McKinney's Cotton Pickers and leader of the Wilburforce Collegians, Carter formed the first of his own big bands in 1932.

These are dates that I have selected almost at random from the detailed chronology included in Morroe Berger, Edward Berger, and James Patrick's exhaustive two-volume *Benny Carter: A Life in American Music* (1982). Another piece of information might give a better sense of just how long Carter has been active in music. The album usually cited as his best is *Further Definitions* (MCA Impulse MCA-5651), from 1961. It reunited him with his fellow saxophonist Coleman Hawkins, whose path had regularly crossed his over the decades, most notably with Henderson in the twenties and on the four titles they recorded together with the guitarist Django Reinhardt, in Paris in 1937. Two numbers were reprised from that 1937 session, with Phil Woods and Charlie Rouse taking the places of the French saxophonists André Ekyan and Alix Combelle. For the album Carter, whose trademark as an arranger is his rich saxophone voicings, also orchestrated Hawkins's emblematic 1939 solo on "Body and Soul" for four horns, and paid homage to Duke Ellington and Ben Webster by including the famous sax-section chorus from their 1940 recording of "Cotton Tail." *Further Definitions* was hailed as a latter-day triumph for Carter upon its release, almost thirty years ago.

Carter has long inspired something approaching awe in his fellow musicians. He surpassed even Johnny Hodges as the primary influence on the alto saxophone before the arrival of Charlie Parker, in the 1940s. But he also plays credible trumpet (Dizzy Gillespie, who was in his brass section as a young musician, once said of him that "he was always the best trumpet player in his band"), and he might have become one of the greatest of jazz clarinetists had he not abandoned the clarinet in 1946.

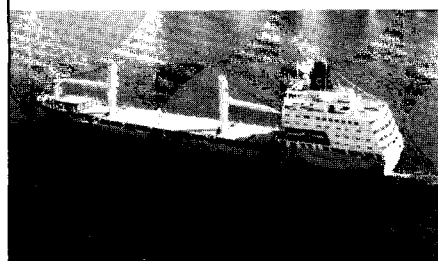
Although he is one of only a handful of musicians to have left a mark on jazz as both an improviser and an orchestrator (Cab Calloway, Benny Goodman, and Artie Shaw were among the rival

bandleaders who played his arrangements in the thirties and forties), Carter never succeeded in keeping an orchestra together for very long, and finally disbanded for good in 1946. What makes this so surprising is that Carter's first band enjoyed the services of Sid Catlett, perhaps the greatest of big-band drummers, and that Gillespie, Teddy Wilson, Chu Berry, Ben Webster, and Miles Davis were Carter band members at one time or another. It probably also hindered Carter that he was in Europe from 1935 to 1938, when America was catching swing fever, and in Hollywood, writing music for movies and TV, for much of three decades, after playing on the soundtrack of and helping to orchestrate the music for *Stormy Weather* in 1943.

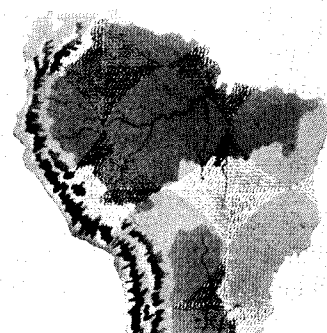
Carter was underutilized and perhaps racially typecast by the studios: although he worked on more than two dozen theatrical films, including *An American in Paris*, *The Sun Also Rises*, *The Guns of Navarone*, and *Red Sky at Morning*, his only complete scores were those for *A Man Called Adam*, a 1966 jazz movie starring Sammy Davis, Jr., and *Buck and the Preacher*, a 1972 western with Sidney Poitier and Harry Belafonte. Carter's best work for TV was his music for some thirty-five episodes of the crime series *M Squad* in the late 1950s. The four selections from *M Squad* included on *All of Me* (Bluebird 3000-2-RB), a recent reissue, demonstrate Carter's ability to produce idiomatically convincing jazz within the framework of TV-genre conventions.

Carter again became a full-time jazz musician around 1976. His stepped-up pace since then, in both playing and composing, has created the happy illusion that he is playing better than ever, and we have had more opportunities to hear him. Everyone I know who writes about jazz seems to have his own favorite Carter solo recorded since that time. Mine is his virtuoso turn on the standard "Lover Man," from his otherwise uneventful 1985 album *A Gentleman and His Music* (Concord Jazz CCD-4285). In addition to being the recent solo that best demonstrates Carter's undiminished instrumental command, it is also the one that best illustrates his confident embrace of contemporary rhythmic values. Hearing "Lover Man," you know at once you're listening to Benny Carter, thanks to that enviably urbane intonation of his (which

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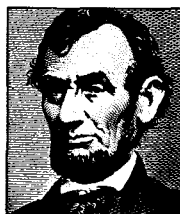
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Hodeir, ever the nay-sayer, once characterized as "effeminate") and to that rococo approach to harmony he once shared with Coleman Hawkins. Still, this isn't a solo you could imagine Carter playing fifty or even twenty years ago, because his asymmetrical double-time phrasing is so modern in conception—it's just short of abstract, despite his fealty to the melody.

LATE LAST summer Carter shared a bill with the vibraphonists Milt Jackson and Bobby Hutcherson at Lincoln Center, just up the block from where the apartment house he lived in as a child once stood; the area was called San Juan Hill in those days, and it was known as a tough neighborhood. Jackson and Hutcherson each played a set accompanied by just a rhythm section; then they joined Carter and a big band for the premiere of a suite called "Good Vibes," which Lincoln Center had commissioned from Carter for this occasion. Although both the featured soloists interpreted Carter's new music with relish, neither paid him the courtesy of performing even one of his tunes during the first half.

In a way, the evening was typical. The only Carter tune you're ever likely to hear during a jam session is "When Lights Are Low," which musicians usually know not from Carter's recordings of it (the first was with the singer Elisabeth Welch, in 1936, and the most famous was with Lionel Hampton on vibraphone, three years later) but from the version Miles Davis recorded in 1953, without Carter's elegant bridge. For that matter, Carter himself is frequently guilty of not featuring enough of his own tunes when he plays nightclubs and festivals.

I asked about this when I spoke with him by telephone in his home in southern California late last year. "That's been because I've always felt that when people come to hear me, they want to hear me play songs with which they're already familiar," he told me in a tone intended to communicate that this policy was the result of practicality, not undue modesty. "But you know, somebody else once asked me the same question, and I told him that I

don't play many of my own tunes because the audience wouldn't know them. He pointed out that they never will get to know them if I don't play them. But I have started traveling with lead sheets of my tunes for the musicians I might play with who don't know them."

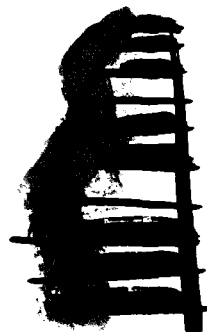
The proof of Carter's genius as a composer can be found on *Central City Sketches* (Musicmasters CIJD 60126X), featuring Carter with the American Jazz Orchestra, a New York repertory ensemble directed by the pianist John Lewis. This includes flawless performances of Carter compositions ranging in vintage from "Blues in My Heart" (1931), which would have been a perfect vehicle for Jackson at Lincoln Center, to the title suite, which Carter completed just in time for a concert he played with the AJO at Cooper Union a week or so before the recording session, in 1987. In addition to reviving interest in Carter, the Cooper Union concert, which was talked about for months afterward, supplied a rationale for the emerging jazz-repertory movement: it called attention to still timely masterpieces that weren't likely to be heard in concert unless someone made a special effort to perform them.

Marian McPartland Plays the Benny Carter Songbook (Concord Jazz CCD-4412), with Carter augmenting the pianist McPartland's trio on six of eleven tracks, nicely complements *Central City Sketches*, featuring as it does informal interpretations of such outstanding Carter tunes as "When Lights Are

Low" (as on the disc with the AJO, the bridge is restored); "Lonely Woman," sung by Peggy Lee in 1947 and not to be confused with pieces of the same name by Ornette Coleman and Horace Silver; "Only Trust Your Heart," a bossa nova introduced by Stan Getz and Astrud Gilberto in the 1964 TV film *The Hanged Man*;

and "Doozy," a sinuous blues that lives up to its name, first recorded on *Further Definitions* and performed twice on *Central City Sketches*.

CARTER NOW records so regularly that it has become possible to pick and choose among his albums. *All That Jazz Live at Princeton* (Musicmasters 5059-2C), his latest, re-



corded in concert last year at Princeton University, where he frequently conducts master classes, suffers from a humdrum selection of tunes—nothing new by Carter, who seems unfamiliar with the chord changes to Thelonious Monk's "Hackensack" and Clifford Brown's "Blues Walk"—and unrewarding vocals by Carter, the trumpeter Clark Terry, and a glib singer named Billy Hill. (Hill was once a member of the pop group the Essex, whose delightful "Easier Said Than Done" reached No. 1 in 1963.) Carter is the only reason for hearing *The Return of Mel Powell* (Chiaroscuro CR[D] 301), which was recorded aboard the S.S. *Norway* in 1987. Powell, who once played piano in Benny Goodman's big band and who last year won a Pulitzer for "serious" composition, sounds as though he's slumming here, or as though he thinks it's still 1938. His choppy, foursquare rhythm inhibits Carter, who seems more in his element when surrounded by relative modernists than he does in the company of musicians from his own era.

Along with *Central City Sketches*, the plums in Carter's recent discography are *My Man Benny—My Man Phil* (Musicmasters 5036-2C), from 1989, on which he piques the alto saxophonist Phil Woods into some beautifully animated playing, and *Over the Rainbow* (Musicmasters 5015-2C), from 1988, which rivals even *Further Definitions* in demonstrating Carter's unparalleled skill at writing for saxophones. The most irresistible of the eight performances on *Over the Rainbow* is the standard "Out of Nowhere." After individual choruses by Carter and fellow saxophonists Frank Wess, Herb Geller, Jimmy Heath, and Joe Temperley (plus a brief spot by the pianist Richard Wyands), Carter leads the saxophones through a speedy series of harmonic variations so full of swagger that at first I assumed I was hearing an orchestration of the solo Coleman Hawkins played on this tune with Carter and Django Reinhardt in 1937.

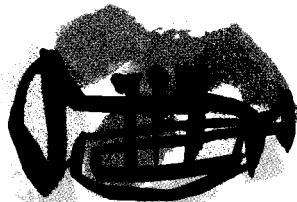
Carter recorded for a variety of labels, large and small, in the 1930s, and this might explain why—with the exception of a no-longer-available boxed set in the Time-Life Giants of Jazz se-

ries—no comprehensive survey of his early recordings has ever been issued by an American company. Before berating American companies for not giving us seminal Benny Carter in chronological order, it's good to remember that these performances are still protected by copyright in the United States, though they no longer are in Europe. Classics—a French label that is distributed here by Qualiton Imports

(24-02 40th Avenue, Long Island City, NY 11101)—has come to the rescue with five volumes (so far) of *Benny Carter and His Orchestra* (Classics 522, 530, 541, 552, and 579).

In addition to all of Carter's big-band sides through 1940, these splendidly remastered compact discs include his work with the Chocolate Dandies, a small, studio-only group drawn from the ranks of the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra and other big bands, and the twelve ahead-of-their-time-and-then-some performances recorded in 1933 by the Ellington-smitten Irish composer Spike Hughes and "His Negro Orchestra," which was actually Carter's big band augmented by such star soloists as Coleman Hawkins and Red Allen. Carter isn't extensively featured on the material by Hughes, but his band distinguishes itself in interpreting Hughes's ambitious scores, and both "Noctourne" and "Music at Midnight" offer striking examples of Carter's abilities as a clarinetist.

Reissues like these usually put elder musicians in the hopeless position of competing with their past accomplishments. Carter actually seems to be gaining on himself as the years roll by. In baseball it's possible to chart the progress of a Darryl Strawberry or a Roger Clemens by measuring his record against that of a Willie Mays or a Sandy Koufax at a similar stage in his career. In jazz, too, we can measure the accomplishments of Wynton Marsalis as he nears thirty by comparing them with the accomplishments of Louis Armstrong, Roy Eldridge, Dizzy Gillespie, or Miles Davis at the same point. We can compare Sonny Rollins at sixty with Coleman Hawkins at that age. But against what other jazz octogenarian can we measure Benny Carter? There has never been anyone like him. □



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An Asian Agenda

The biggest cities aren't always the best

by James Fallows

PEOPLE TRAVELING in Asia have a natural tendency to focus on capital cities—Tokyo, Bangkok, Seoul. The international airlines go there; the hotels are modern and the clerks speak English; businesses, universities, and museums are concentrated in one place. In many Asian countries the capital dominates to a degree that no single city has ever dominated the United States. Greater Tokyo is Japan's equivalent of New York, Washington, Boston, and Los Angeles combined. In the past decade Thailand's industrial output has soared, but if you exclude businesses based in or near Bangkok it has barely changed.

The imbalance between metropolis and hinterland is a big social problem for Asian societies, as it is for Third World countries in general. Subsistence farmers in Java or rural Thailand know they must go to the capital if they want to educate their children or find a paying job. But the same imbalance also creates opportunities for a "second city" approach to travel. Precisely because so many of the bad (as well as good) effects of modernization have been shunted away from most sites except the capital, the smaller cities in each country can display the nation's character to advantage.

The "second cities" I have in mind are not always exactly second-ranking in population and economic strength. What matters is that they are large enough to be interesting but don't suffer the distortions of being No. 1. Kyoto is the classic second city, a showplace of traditional culture—Asia's counterpart to Florence or Leningrad. The cities in Asian countries can generally be divided into "Tokyo" and "Kyoto" categories. Those in the first category, today's capitals, are where you go to do your business and realize your ambitions. Those in the second, often yesterday's capitals, are where you drink in the atmosphere and look around.

Seoul has skyscrapers, a few historic gates and temples, and lots of pollution and traffic jams. Kyongju, in southeast Korea, was, like Kyoto, a capital a thousand years ago and is now a city of temples and shrines. Such bustle as Malaysia has is confined to Kuala Lumpur. Malacca and Penang, Malaysia's two second cities, would remain recognizable in their torpor to Graham Greene or Somerset Maugham.

My favorite illustrations of the second-city principle are in Southeast Asia. In Thailand, Indonesia, and Burma, travelers who make it beyond

At left: a Buddha and stupas at the temple of Borobudur, near Jogjakarta, Indonesia. Above: women of the Akha tribe in northern Thailand, near Chiang Mai

the capital will have a much different and more satisfying experience than those who stay on the big-city route.

BANGKOK, Thailand's No. 1 city in every conceivable way, will someday provide rich material for a writer or film-maker who wants to show, as Dickens did with London in the mid-nineteenth century, how cruel and messy economic growth can be. For the past decade the city has been booming and many people have gotten rich, but daily life for most people seems to have gotten worse. The bus stations disgorge rural migrants who end up sleeping in shanties. The roads are so glutted with cars and the motorized carts called *tuktuks* that the traffic stops and the air turns brown. Chiang Mai, Thailand's second city, has fostered enough of a spillover tourist industry that old-timers complain that it, too, is being "ruined." I think it still has a long way to go.

Chiang Mai is near the northern tip of Thailand, in the vast highland zone that spreads across the nearby borders of Burma, Laos, and China's Yunnan province. This region includes the infamous "Golden Triangle," where much of the world's narcotics supply originates. Anthropologists flock here to study the dozen or so hill tribes, such as the Hmong, the Akha, and the Lahu, who move across national borders, practicing slash-and-burn agriculture as they go.

Chiang Mai itself has a fresh-air upland feel after the humidity and dirt of Bangkok. It was the capital of the independent Lanna Thai kingdom 500 years ago, and the old moat is visible below the restored city walls. Just outside the city is the leafy, improbably Wellesley-like campus of Chiang Mai University. Its front gate is dominated by the university seal, which depicts an elephant brandishing the torch of knowledge in its upraised trunk.

The city is distinctly a jumping-off point at the edge of the frontier. Thais are always coming in from the hills with tribal crafts to sell and, of course, with drugs. (If this, unwisely, should be your interest, bear in mind that U.S. Customs pays close attention to travelers who have visited Thailand.) And foreigners are always heading out of Chiang Mai on hill-country treks.

I am sure that anthropologists would deplore the superficiality of these jour-

neys. Even I was depressed by the typical one-day trip that hotels and tour companies offer. As the huge "trek" bus rolls up to each "authentic village," the gaily costumed tribesmen pop out to their assigned places at souvenir stands. But my wife and I went on a three-day trek toward the Burmese border that was authentic enough for us. It began with a four-hour drive in the back of a pickup truck, then a three-hour trip upriver in a motorized canoe, and then what seemed like a month but was actually two hours in a howdah on the back of an elephant as it swayed and lumbered up steep hills. We traveled the next few days on foot and slept in villages that may not have been "unspoiled" but were certainly unimproved. As we walked on mountain trails overlooking glades full of swaying opium poppies, I speculated that the "supply-side" policy, which would attempt to solve America's drug problems by cutting off the source, was touchingly ambitious.

You can get to Chiang Mai from Bangkok by taking either an hour-long flight on Thai Air or a relatively comfortable overnight trip (be sure to book a sleeper) on the national railroad. It's possible to rent a car and make the drive in twelve or so hours, but as in many developing countries, driving is not really safe. Chiang Mai has modern hotels—we stayed at the Chiang Inn Hotel—and numerous hostels.

INDONESIA HAS NOT been as aggressive or clever as Thailand in promoting tourism, but in a way its artlessness underscores its appeal. Indonesia is the most exotic-seeming place I have ever been: the Indonesians seem to be so wrapped up in their own culture that they don't much care what outsiders might think of them. When you step out onto a street in Indonesia, you are enveloped by clouds of clove-scented smoke from the local *kretek* cigarettes. I used to think of this as an obvious but apt symbol for the distinctive "atmosphere" of Indonesia. When you are lucky, you are enveloped as well by clouds of music from gamelan orchestras, with their ethereal bronze or bamboo gongs.

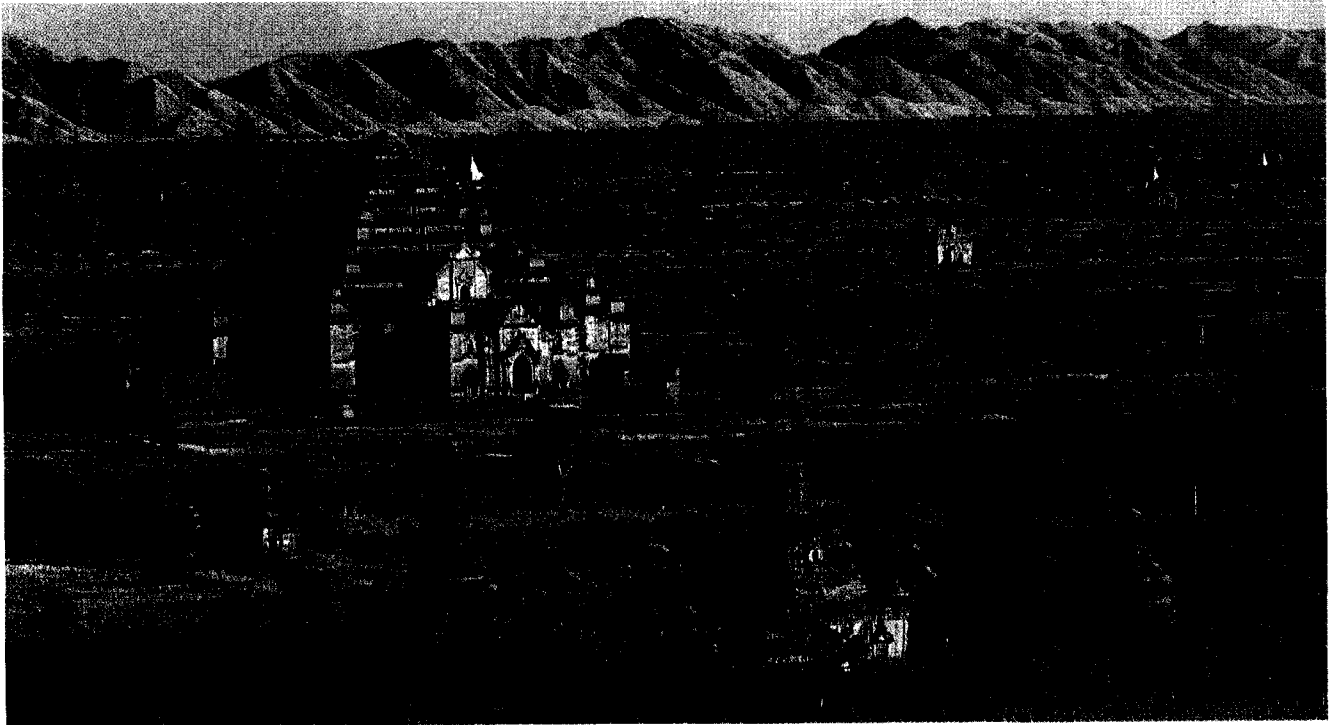
The traditional stronghold of Javanese arts is Jogjakarta, 300 miles southeast of Jakarta, in the center of Java. Jakarta itself, Indonesia's No. 1 city, is huge and sprawling and ugly. Jogja, as

the No. 2 city is called, is small and slow and, even compared with Chiang Mai, unspoiled. It remains the home of the arts that give Indonesia its strong cultural identity: waxing and dying batik cloth; making the leather and wooden puppets that are used in the eerie *wayang* shadow plays; gamelan music; and Javanese dance, with its fantastic backward manipulation of the fingers. Three times a week dance or gamelan performances are held in an outdoor pavilion at the *kraton*, the 250-year-old palace of the Sultan of Jogjakarta. The courtyard of the *kraton* is made of hard-packed red dirt. Barefoot court attendants pad across it, carrying special rice to the sultan's table or bearing batiks to be washed. An extraordinarily beautiful movie called *Max Havelaar*, made more than a decade ago, depicted Java during the Dutch imperial age. It's hard to find, but if you ever come across it, you'll see how little *kraton* life has changed.

Garuda, the main Indonesian airline, offers an inexpensive hour-long flight from Jakarta to Jogja, which is the easiest way to get there. Another possibility is a special train called the Bima, after a famous figure from the *wayang* plays. It is a charming combination of squalor and elegance; the table may be dirty, but the waiter spreads a starched white tablecloth over it before you dine. The Bima is, however, comically inconvenient, arriving from Jakarta sometime between midnight and 4:00 A.M. The leading hotel in town, the Ambarrukmo Palace, has a gamelan orchestra in its lobby and a pool outside. Jogja, too, has many hostels.

When you tire of Jogja itself, you can drive an hour outside town to the mighty temple of Borobudur. This is a multi-tiered stone monument, as big at its base as one of the Great Pyramids of Egypt. Indonesia's religious life involves Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and animist faiths enmeshed with one another, and Borobudur itself portrays both Hindu and Buddhist deities. The structure, which is covered with hundreds of Buddha figures, has recently been restored in a fifteen-year project sponsored by the United Nations.

It is a chore to climb to the top of the temple, but the result is worthwhile, especially at sunset or dawn. In every direction you see the deep, deep green of rice paddies and palm trees, combining with the red of tile roofs and the



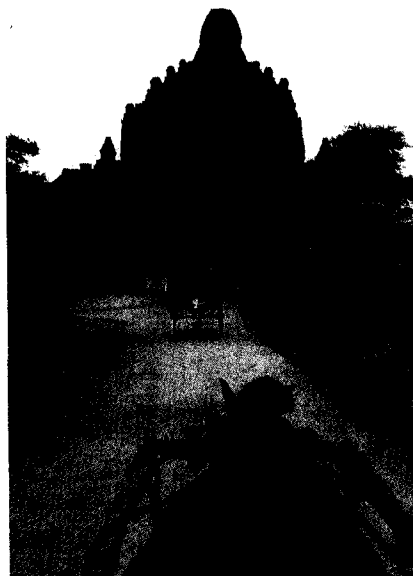
In Pagan, Burma, which was a capital city a millennium ago, Dhammayangyi Temple is among the 5,000 monuments still standing

orange of the sun, all the colors intense tropical hues. The volcano Mount Merapi, whose eruptions make the region's soil so fertile, sits smoking in the middle distance. Heavy clouds blow across the sky.

THE ONLY Asian vista I've found more evocative is one in Burma's hinterland. It is awkward even to mention Burma (which its regime now calls Myanmar) in a travel article, since the country is so difficult to get to and is a place of such despair. Apart perhaps from North Korea's, Burma's government is the most repressive and benighted in all of Asia, a counterpart to Haiti's in the days of Papa Doc and the Tonton Macoute. The country's No. 1 city, Rangoon, is a heartbreaking museum of decay. The buildings the British left behind forty years ago are still there, but now they're crumbling in the heat and rain.

Yet in Burma's broad central plain, through which runs the Irrawaddy River, is a marvel that should be as famous as the Great Wall of China. Mandalay, Burma's second city, is more cheerful and bustling than Rangoon; like Chiang Mai, it is an entrepôt for traders and smugglers coming in from the hills. Beyond Mandalay, five or six hours by jeep, is the marvel: Pagan, which was the capital of northern Burma a thou-

sand years ago. During a 200-year burst of religious fervor, Pagan's rulers built thousands of temples, pagodas, stupas, and other monuments. Then the armies of Kublai Khan stormed in and Pagan was abandoned. As Tony Wheeler, the author of the indispensable *Burma: A Travel Survival Kit*, wrote, it is "as if all the medieval cathedrals of Europe had been built in one small area, and then deserted, barely touched over the centuries."

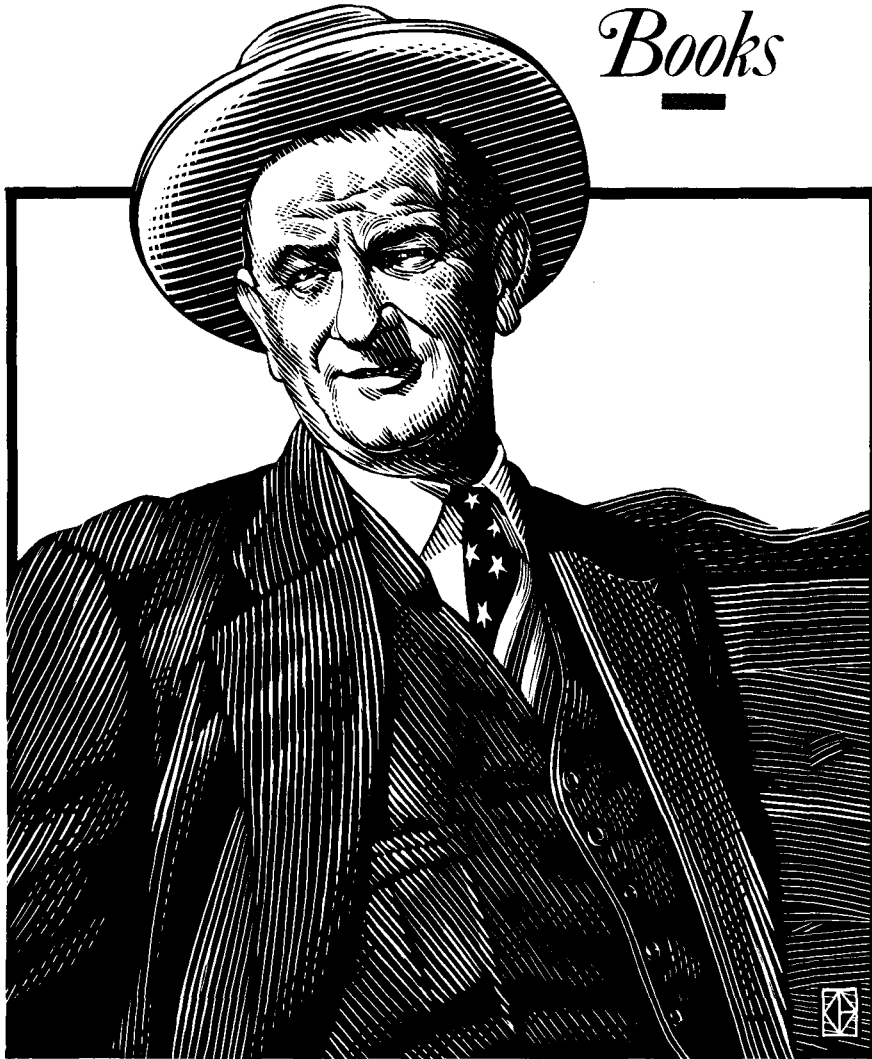


Transportation by tonga in Pagan

LINDSAY HEBBERD / WOODFIN CAMP

Most of the structures were made of wood, and have vanished. Still, more than 5,000 of them, made of brick and earth, remain, some as large and grandiose as the Victor Emmanuel Monument in Rome, others pup-tent-sized personal shrines. Apart from the temples and pagodas, almost nothing remains in Pagan: a few farmers tending plots of beans or rice among the monuments, a few vendors sitting by trays of thousand-year-old clay pipes or pottery shards. I believe these artifacts to be authentic; as I walked from temple to temple, I saw other relics protruding from the dusty earth. Perversely yet somehow inevitably, the only modern-looking factory I saw in Burma is also located in Pagan, its smokestacks poking up among the spires.

If, just before sunset, you climb to the top of one of the largest temples, such as Thatbyinnyu or Ananda, and look in any direction except toward the chemical plant, you survey an unearthly scene. Dark-ocher temples stand out against the baked red-clay landscape, for miles and miles and miles. The sun starts descending, and all the reds deepen. No sound or glare of city lights intrudes. You think about how big the world still is, and how briefly men live. You will not see these sights or think just these thoughts back home—or in any country's No. 1 city. □



A Fairer Likeness

by David M. Kennedy

LONE STAR RISING: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1908–1960
by Robert Dallek.
Oxford University Press, \$30.00.

“PAINT MY picture truly like me,” Oliver Cromwell allegedly instructed his portraitist, “roughnesses, pimples, warts, and everything. . . .” In the three centuries since Cromwell’s time his injunction has been transformed. It once served as a reminder to the biographer to strive for realism and balance and critical distance, but it has somehow become an imperative—the wart doctrine, it might be called—to expose

and emphasize the most scurrilous details of the subject’s life, and to assume not merely a critical posture but an adversarial one toward the biographee. Without such salacious revelations and such authorial animosity, modern biographies risk wanting for credibility and, presumably, for readers. Whether it is modern lives or only modern literary tastes that have grown more lurid and antagonistic is an interesting speculation.

Few contemporary practitioners of the biographer’s craft have honored the wart doctrine more sedulously than Robert A. Caro. The two volumes published to date of his biography of Lyndon Johnson (*The Path to Power*, 1982 [previewed in *The Atlantic*], and *Means of Ascent*, 1990), which take the story of Johnson’s life as far as his election to the U.S. Senate in 1948, abundantly demonstrate Caro’s thoroughness as a researcher and his skill as a dramatist. They also attest to his remorse-

less hostility to his subject. Caro commands an encyclopedic knowledge of the minutiae of Johnson’s life, right down to the pearl-gray 20X beaver Stetson and the bright floral-patterned necktie that Johnson sported at the judicial hearing concerning allegations of fraud in his 1948 election. Caro’s account of that election, in *Means of Ascent*, is a page-turning triumph of the storyteller’s art. But what animates Caro’s swarms of detail, and what fuels his obsessive, indefatigable pursuit of his man, is a fixation on Johnson’s “utter ruthlessness . . . and a seemingly bottomless capacity for deceit, deception and betrayal.” Caro deems that characterization so essential to his account that it appears verbatim in the introductions to both his volumes.

Now comes another enormous biography of Johnson, covering much of the same ground, by Robert Dallek, a historian at the University of California at Los Angeles and the author of a prizewinning study of Franklin Roosevelt’s foreign policy. Like Caro, Dallek cannot contain Johnson’s large life between two covers, though he has managed in this first of two projected volumes to bring the story as far as Johnson’s election as Vice President, in 1960. His research is every bit as comprehensive as Caro’s. As a dramatist he may have to yield to Caro, though his personality sketches and his eye for the telling anecdote are masterly—reminiscent of Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., at his best, in his *Age of Roosevelt*. Dallek can also spin a mighty good yarn, while avoiding melodramatic excesses like Caro’s description of Johnson’s opponent Coke Stevenson, accompanied by the famed former Texas Ranger Frank Hamer, as they strode down the street of the Rio Grande Valley town of Alice in 1948 to challenge the vote count in the now-notorious Ballot Box Number 13: “two tall, broad-shouldered, erect, silent men—two living legends of Texas,” with Hamer’s right hand “poised just above the butt of his gun, his fingers curled for the draw.” On balance, as a historian seeking to place his subject in context and as a biographer sensitive to the full range of Johnson’s stu-

peflyngly complex character, Dallek has Caro beat all to feathers—as they might have said in that bleak, gritty pre-New Deal west Texas hill country that framed Johnson's life and perhaps holds the key to understanding it.

LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON presents an extraordinary challenge to any biographer. He was a man of vibrant compassion and colossal vulgarity, a man who spent his desperately needed first paycheck on athletic equipment for his impoverished pupils in the dusty little Texas town of Cotulla, and a man who habitually forced subordinates to watch him defecate. He combined Falstaffian appetites with Lincolnian ambitions, personal greed with high ideals. He gorged on work, women, and food, overbore friend and foe alike, and ravened for both money and power. Like Falstaff's, his physical presence was overwhelming—all six feet three and a half inches of him, thrusting himself into intimidating proximity with his interlocutor, perpetually in motion, pawing and hugging and poking, wheedling, cajoling, boasting, flattering, threatening, persuading, demanding. Even Franklin Roosevelt, hardly of retiring temperament himself and no stranger to forceful personalities, thought that Johnson "came on like a freight train."

Unlike Lincoln's, Johnson's ambition was not simply a little engine that knew no rest; it was a roaring, unstoppable dynamo. It propelled him from obscure rural poverty to prodigious wealth and the pinnacles of political achievement—and eventually over the precipice of political ruination. The arc of his life's trajectory, even in a culture weaned on Horatio Alger myths, was extraordinary—from his childhood in a rude home, with outdoor plumbing and illuminated by kerosene lamp, all the way to the White House. He owed his achievement not simply to the typical Alger hero's qualities of luck and pluck but to titanic labor and consuming competitiveness. He detested losing. When the high school debate team that he coached in Houston in 1931 was defeated, he—not his debaters—ran to the men's room and vomited. His withdrawal from the presidential election of 1968 must have inflicted upon him unimaginable agonies. Russell Baker once compared Johnson to "a character out of a Russian novel . . .



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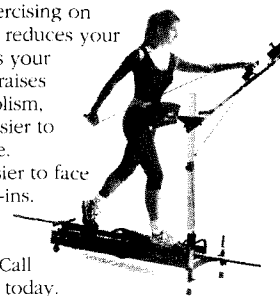
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**THREE FORESTRY
MYTHS**

by Perri Knize

The U.S. Forest Service argues that federal timber is needed to meet an escalating demand for wood; that the sale of federal timber aids timber-dependent communities; and that timber sales make a profit for the federal treasury. All these claims, the author argues, are without foundation.



**CHARLEMAGNE'S
DREAM**

by Kenneth C. Danforth

For more than a millennium Europeans have sought to link two of their greatest rivers, the Rhine and the Danube, by a canal. The goal will be reached next year, when one of the greatest public-works projects in history is finally completed.



**HOW I CAME WEST,
AND WHY I STAYED**

by Alison Baker

"On one wall of her cabin she had a USGS map, all squiggles, with red-headed pins marking the cheerleader sightings." A short story.

a storm of warring human instincts: sinner and saint, buffoon and statesman, cynic and sentimentalist." His aide George Reedy called him "a man of too many paradoxes." Telling his life story would tax the narrative power of Tolstoy and the descriptive talents of Mencken. Dallek is aware of the scope of his burden as Johnson's biographer, and he prudently warns the reader that his subject presents "contradictions that defy easy understanding."

Caro seeks understanding through simplification, with the result that his account, especially in *Means of Ascent*, is in the end as one-dimensional as the lone and level Texas llano. Dallek renders his subject with much more chiaroscuro. Indeed, Dallek often casts light where Caro only sees shadow. In Caro's view, for example, the Texas political operator Alvin J. Wirtz promoted Johnson's candidacy for Congress in 1937 as a means to rescue Wirtz's client Brown & Root from imminent ruin. The construction firm of Brown & Root had staked its future on the prospect of federal funding for a dam on the lower Colorado River, near Austin. Congressman Johnson would be the instrument of obtaining that funding, and to get him elected, according to Caro, Wirtz cynically instructed Johnson to run as "Roosevelt's man." That electoral strategy, Caro writes, was "nothing but pragmatism." Wirtz in fact shared "the views of the reactionary Roosevelt-hating businessmen of whom he was both legal representative and confidant."

Dallek acknowledges the interest that Brown & Root had in the young Johnson, and the enormous, often surreptitious, probably illegal role that Brown & Root, along with Wirtz, played in financing Johnson's later political career. But Dallek also offers a description of Wirtz as someone who "loved Roosevelt and the New Deal, and . . . was a champion of public power and Federal welfare programs." Moreover, Dallek adds that "like Lyndon, [Wirtz] saw FDR's New Deal as helping to create a more prosperous Texas and new south." He concedes,

Wirtz and Johnson were self-serving opportunists. . . ; but they were also new breed southerners who saw the Federal government as a vehicle for advancing the interests of their state and region. They were not only shrewd operators with their eyes on

the main chance but also men of vision who worked effectively for a larger good.

Here lay a rationale for the lower Colorado River dam project—and for a raft of other federal projects in Texas and the South which Johnson promoted—which reached far beyond the interests of Brown & Root.

IT WAS JOHNSON'S appreciation of that rationale which led President Roosevelt in 1937 to pay special attention to the new young representative from Texas's Tenth Congressional District. Johnson was "the most remarkable young man," FDR told his assistant, Thomas Corcoran. "Now I like this boy, and you're going to help him with anything you can." Corcoran helped plenty. "When Roosevelt told me to take care of the boy," he later explained, "that meant to watch out for his financial backers too. In Lyndon's case there was just this little road building firm, Brown and Root." Dallek adds, "Word went out . . . that Federal contracts in Texas were to go to 'Lyndon's friends.'" For example, Brown & Root was awarded the contract to build the Corpus Christi Naval Air Station—one of many such favors.

For Caro, these kinds of revelations suffice to damn to perdition Johnson and all his works. For Dallek, they are part of a larger design, one for which not Johnson but Franklin Roosevelt was the original draftsman. Roosevelt's purpose was announced in the Roosevelt Administration's 1938 *Report on Economic Conditions of the South*, which described the region as "the Nation's No. 1 economic problem. . . ." The New Deal fired its first salvo in the war on southern poverty with the Tennessee Valley Authority, launched in 1933 as the country's first comprehensive experiment in regional economic development. By the late 1930s a much enlarged array of New Deal programs could be brought to bear to channel federal resources southward: Farm Security Administration loans to farmers, Work Projects Administration and Public Works Administration contracts for construction projects, U.S. Housing Authority subsidies to home-builders, and Rural Electrification Administration grants to electrical cooperatives. Lyndon Johnson used them all. Within two years of his election to Congress he had secured some \$70 million in

federal monies for his constituents.

The Second World War, of course, vastly accelerated the pace of government investment in the South—and in the West as well. Taken together, New Deal and wartime policies constituted a far-reaching program for the forced economic modernization of the South and the West. Beyond that economic development beckoned a vision of politically modernizing the South, relaxing the death grip of the conservative southern establishment on the Democratic Party, and clearing the path for the civil-rights movement. Though those policies proved largely successful, they were ferociously resisted by many southerners, and are controversial still.

This is the picture into which Dallek paints Lyndon Johnson. He persuasively renders this part of his story as something considerably more interesting than the saga of a self-serving pork-barrel politician. In Lyndon Johnson, Franklin Roosevelt had found one of the few promising instruments of his "southern strategy." Roosevelt's "Brain Trust" Rexford Tugwell once described FDR's purpose as, simply, "a better life for all Americans, and a better America to live it in. I think it was that general." The President's concern merged with the aching ambition of the young congressman, an ambition that transcended his personal desires. "Of all the things I have ever done," Johnson reflected in 1959, "nothing has ever given me as much satisfaction as bringing power to the hill country of Texas. Today in my home county we have full grown men who have never ever seen a kerosene lamp except possibly in a movie—and that is all to the good."

JOHNSON NOT ONLY shared Roosevelt's vision; in due time he vastly amplified it. Roosevelt's war on southern poverty would prove to be only a preliminary skirmish in what became Johnson's full-scale, nationwide War on Poverty. Roosevelt's relatively modest aspirations for the New Deal would inflate into Johnson's heady dreams of the Great Society. Johnson's "whole life experience," Dallek writes,

was at the core of his identity as a southern New Dealer liberal nationalist who aimed to integrate the South into the mainstream of Ameri-

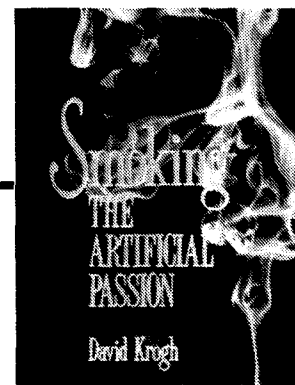
can economic life. . . . [T]he plight of the children at Cotulla and his sense of exhilaration at being able to help them, . . . the suffering caused by the Depression and the humane response of FDR's government, all made him a strong believer in using Federal power for the good of needy Americans everywhere, but especially in the South.

Dallek insists that it is only within this larger framework that we can appreciate the true drama of the victory margin of eighty-seven votes that "Landslide Lyndon" achieved in the 1948 Democratic senatorial primary campaign against Texas Governor Coke Stevenson.

It now seems beyond question—thanks largely to Caro's investigative effort—that Johnson's operatives in the 1948 election illegally added 202 votes to his count in the town of Alice, and perhaps more elsewhere. Whether this manipulation of the voting returns merely offset identical abuses by Stevenson's forces will probably remain a moot question. But the story of the 1948 election is not just a melodrama of electoral villainy, nor simply an episode in an individual's political career. It is a key chapter in the history of the modern South, and of the nation.

As Dallek makes clear, Coke Stevenson was no rudely wronged white-hatted innocent. He had helped W. Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel steal the 1941 senatorial election from Johnson through fraudulent reporting of the vote from certain Texas counties. He was associated with the so-called Texas Regulars, a potent political faction that in 1944 had split the Texas Democratic Party into pro- and anti-Roosevelt elements. The Regulars denounced "the Communist-controlled New Deal," called for a restoration of states' rights, and asserted "the supremacy of the white race." Their actions foreshadowed the 1948 split in the national party, when the Dixiecrats bolted in protest against the strong civil-rights plank in Harry S. Truman's platform.

Stevenson himself had commented about a wartime lynching in Texarkana that "certain members of the Negro race from time to time furnish the setting for mob violence by the outrageous crimes which they commit." He was also an isolationist who opposed the Marshall Plan. According to the legendary Texas historian J. Frank Do-



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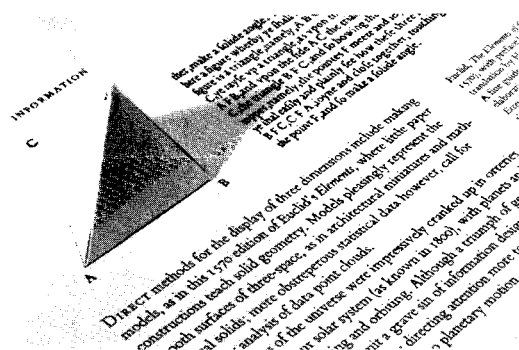
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"RECTANGULAR"

1. R(I-GO)-R
2. G-IN-S-ENG
3. ELIDE (hidden)
4. DELIBERATED (anag.)
5. TEL-EPA-(THIS)T (tape + let rev.)
6. ARE-NA (rev.)
7. R(ACE)-R
8. LACK-A-DA-IS-I-CAL(I)
9. EART-(HEN-WAR)E (a tree anag.)
10. SP(RIGHT-LINE)-SS
11. ELS(DE
12. R(I)SER (anag. + I)
13. PIC-K-SUP
14. H-O-LOG-RAP-H
15. ROLLER COASTER (anag.)
16. TR(y)-EAT
17. SUPERGIANTS (anag.)
18. ELBOW GREASE (anag.)
19. S(EST)ETS
20. GROUNDHO-G (anag. + g)
21. TI(BE)T
22. AN(IM)-A
23. T(RUST-I)EST
24. A(IRMA)DA
25. CO(y)-MIC(e)
26. RUMOR (homophone)
27. EXTERMINATE (anag.)
28. DR-ATT-ED
29. CARD-I-AC(e)
30. SPONTANEOUS (anag.)
31. DI(SAD-VAN)TAGED (dated GI anag.)
32. D(A-V)ID
33. ESPLANADE (hidden)
34. PLUM-P
35. EXTRAPOLATE (anag.)

bie, Stevenson knew "as much about foreign affairs as a hog knows about Sunday." He represented, in short, everything from which Johnson and the national Democratic leadership were trying to liberate the South: its stultifying heritage of parochialism, economic backwardness, racism, and isolationism. For this reason Truman, like Roosevelt before him, favored Johnson's candidacy. Dallek even speculates that Truman's Attorney General, Tom Clark, may have lobbied Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black to issue the court order that effectively ended Stevenson's petition to keep Johnson off the ballot.

It is the cardinal virtue of Dallek's book that here and elsewhere he renders the events of Johnson's life in their full historical context. The result is a biography that illumines not only both the excellencies and the malignancies of Johnson's often baffling character but also the political and social landscape across which he so hugely moved. Dallek does not blink at the unsavory parts of his subject, nor does he luxuriate in them. He understands that political survival in Texas may have necessitated dirty tricks, and assuredly required occasional ideological trimming and the delicate balancing of principle and practicality. Truman knew this too, and did not object to Johnson's support for the Taft-Hartley Law, an anti-labor measure opposed by liberals and passed over Truman's veto. There was no political advantage to a Texas politician in antagonizing "the big oil boys" when, as Johnson explained, "labor's not much stronger in Texas than a popcorn fart."

AS LONG AS HE was a Texas politician, this was the balancing act that Lyndon Johnson was compelled to perform. Witnessing the conservative Republican take-over of Congress in 1946, he shifted rightward, muting his New Dealish sentiments. Yet Dallek suggests that this was a tactical adjustment, not proof of insincerity or of callous opportunism. Insofar as possible Johnson stayed true to his New Deal heritage. In his maiden Senate speech, in 1949, he opposed applying cloture to debate on civil-rights legislation, thus preserving the classic southern device of the filibuster as a defense against civil-rights reform. But seven years later, in 1956, he was

one of only three southern senators who refused to sign the "Southern Manifesto," which pledged resistance to the Supreme Court's school-integration decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. That refusal, said Oregon Senator Richard Neuberger, constituted as "courageous an act of political valor as I have seen. . . ."

Johnson was by then well on his way to becoming the most powerful Senate majority leader in American history. The columnist Stewart Alsop mused that he had perhaps become even more powerful than the President, "because he loves to exercise power and President Eisenhower does not." His influence in Congress, his geographical background, and what Dallek calls his "genuine commitment to New Deal, Fair Deal programs, the liberal nationalism of the thirties and forties, that transformed America," made him a natural vice-presidential candidate on the Democratic ticket with John Fitzgerald Kennedy in 1960. On November 22, 1963, in Dallas, he became President of the United States.

This installment of Dallek's biography ends in 1960, but in a sense both it and Robert Caro's volumes are books about the decade that followed. For both authors, the paradoxes of Johnson's life mirror and perhaps embody the central, agonizing paradox of the 1960s, the decade of triumphant liberal achievement and catastrophic liberal failure. Both Caro and Dallek seem preoccupied with some urgent riddles. Perhaps, they suggest, much as a knowledge of Lincoln's life can help unlock the historical meaning of the Civil War, a deep understanding of Johnson's life will provide clues to these riddles: How did American society, just as it conquered the heights of liberal reform, almost immediately slide into a bitter repudiation of the liberal heritage? What explains the seismic shift in American political and cultural values which shook this country in the 1960s and whose aftershocks unsettle us still?

Caro places the epicenter of that shift in Dallas, precisely at the instant of Kennedy's death. Until that moment, he writes, "the delicate yet crucial fabric of credence and faith between the people of the United States and the man they had placed in the White House" was intact. "By the time Johnson left office, the fabric was in

shreds." So, too, Caro implies, was the social fabric in general, and Lyndon Johnson was the culprit. This view of history is consistent with the conventions of dramatic (or melodramatic) narrative of which Caro is a master, but it does scant justice to the complex realities of modern American history. It also, to put it mildly, assigns a rather large explanatory role to a single man's personality. It is, in the end, a cartoon.

Robert Dallek is not a cartoonist but a scrupulously faithful portraitist. He appreciates how tangled is the skein of history, and how mysterious is the human heart—especially Lyndon Johnson's heart. He gives us Johnson warts and all. He knows that if you want Falstaff, you can't have him lean. If understanding Johnson's life is in fact the key to understanding the 1960s, in Dallek's telling neither the puzzle nor the solution will be a simple matter. How the liberal legacy fared in Johnson's hands in the tumultuous decade of his presidency will be the essential subject of Dallek's next volume. This reviewer can't wait to read it. □

A Voice Against Anonymous Death

by Michael Lydon

THE JAMES JONES READER:
Outstanding Selections From
His War Writings
Birch Lane Press/Carol Publishing,
\$24.95.

WHEN THE JAPANESE attacked Pearl Harbor, on December 7, 1941, James Jones was there, a twenty-year-old enlisted man eating Sunday breakfast in the mess hall at nearby Schofield Barracks. Nothing seemed to set him apart from his fellows. The son of a small-town Illinois dentist, Jones had joined the Army out of high school, one more directionless Depression kid looking for three squares and a bunk guaranteed. He

had started reading Thomas Wolfe, however, and discovered that he had been "a writer all along without really having realized it."

That morning he and the others looked up from their pancakes and coffee as dull rumbles shook the barracks. Someone said it must be dynamite, but even as the men nodded agreement, they heard fighter planes screaming overhead. Still clutching their bonus-ration half pints of milk, they ran into the quadrangle and saw columns of smoke rising above Wheeler Field. Japanese pilots, flying so low the soldiers could see their faces, strafed them with machine-gun fire, and they rushed back inside for their weapons. "This is it," one man said to another.

Jones described Pearl Harbor morning—using nearly the same words—four times in his writing, first ten months later, in a book report on *The Red Badge of Courage* for a University of Hawaii English course, and then in *From Here to Eternity*, *The Pistol*, and the nonfiction *WWII*. And no wonder: he knew he was an eyewitness to an event that changed millions of lives, his among them. Yet those unforgettable few minutes had a particular impact on Jones. In their smoke and confusion a young writer suddenly saw his great subject—men at war.

From that moment, though he was soon fighting on Guadalcanal, even killing a Japanese soldier in hand-to-hand combat, Jones was as much observer as participant. The regimental doctor teased him in the heat of battle:

"Hello, Jonesie. Getting more material for that book of yours you're gonna write?"

I laughed, a little hysterically probably. "More than I want, Doc."

Days and nights facing instant death numbed Jones and the other soldiers to their souls, an agonizing process Jones later called "the evolution of a soldier." The last step in this process, Jones wrote in *WWII*, was "to accept anonymity in death," and this step his own nascent hope of immortality would not let him take.

I remember lying on my belly more than once, and looking at the other sweating faces all around me and wondering which of us lying there who died that week would ever be remembered in the particulars of his death by any of the others who sur-



vived. And of course nobody else would know, or much care. I simply did not want to die and not be remembered for it. Or not be remembered at all.

Luckily, Jones suffered head and ankle injuries just bad enough to get him shipped to an Army hospital in the States—"the best way to be wounded," according to Corporal Fife in *The Thin Red Line*, the second of Jones's three great war novels. More serious was the emotional damage. When again declared fit for active duty, Jones thrice went AWOL to escape going back into combat, this time in Europe. Army psychiatrists found a "psychoneurosis" that had not been present when he enlisted, and in July of 1944 Jones was honorably discharged for "disability in line of duty and not due to his own misconduct." He went home to Robinson, Illinois, and began to write.

Seven years of flailing, the first two sympathetically guided by Wolfe's legendary editor, Maxwell Perkins, of Scribner's, produced *From Here to Eternity*, a big, brawling novel about the soldiers in pre-Pearl Hawaii. Despite occasional run-on sentences inspired by Wolfe—

But in early March the times between the rains got shorter and the rains themselves got longer, until finally there were no times between, but only rain, of which the earth would avidly drink its fill and then, like a man dehydrated in the desert who can't keep from drinking too much, vomit all the rest it could not

assimilate, down the streets and down the hills, along the flumes and irrigation ditches that webbed the carmine earth of the plateau and now were torrential rivers.

—the scope and detail of *Eternity's* realism, and its frank vernacular language, owe more to Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, and James T. Farrell. An enormous best seller, *Eternity* became, like *The Grapes of Wrath* before it and *The Caine Mutiny* after it, a novel that a big public and critics alike took to heart. The stubborn southern loner Prewitt, the cynical Sergeant Warden, and Maggio, the scrappy Italian (soon played by Montgomery Clift, Burt Lancaster, and Frank Sinatra in a film that swept the Academy Awards), became well-loved characters. Readers everywhere winced and cheered simultaneously as Prewitt killed cruel Fatso Judson to avenge Maggio's murder:

His knife went into Fatso at the diaphragm, just under the ribs. . . .

They stood that way perhaps a second or two, perhaps five seconds, thigh to thigh, Prew with his lower lip between his teeth pushing and twisting the knifeblade probing in the fat until the haft was buried in it gouging. . . . Then Fatso started down.

Eternity made Jones famous, a lion of New York's hard-drinking literary crowd, profiled in *Life* and paired with Norman Mailer as an angry young man of the postwar novel. In the twenty-six years until his death, in 1977, Jones wrote steadily, publishing six more

novels plus a volume of short stories and two books of reportage. All sold well, and Jones lived well in Paris on the proceeds. Yet Major American Writer status is no guard against fashion, and Jones's reputation rode a roller coaster, up when he wrote about war, down when he took on peace. Critics savaged *The Merry Month of May* ("as great a crime against nature as against literature"—*Newsweek*), even his friend William Styron found *Go to the Widow-Maker* "filled with plywood characters, implausible dialogue, and thick wedges of plain atrocious writing," and Mailer wrote in *Advertisements for Myself* that Jones had "sold out." Jones's struggles against the blockbuster trap are evident in a letter to Helen Meyer, the president of Dell Publishing, defending his offbeat, and short, *A Touch of Danger*.

I think when you say "major novel" you really mean "big, long, naturalistic novel." Such as Jones is "noted for." . . .

I don't think you understand what's a major book, Helen. It doesn't have to be 500,000 words.

The somber tone of *Whistle*, Jones's unfinished and posthumously published last novel, won wide respect, rounding off his career on an appreciative note. Yet in the decade and a half since, Jones has drifted into a "jury's out" limbo, and bringing in a favorable verdict today means bucking current critical trends. Not only is he a traditional realist in the postmodern era, he is also a White Male Author if ever

there was one. Pugnacious masculinity rises like heat from every paragraph. His characters, nearly all white men, live a life that "still had fist fights in it," and Jones describes their relations with women in terms that are more passionately than politically correct.

Indeed, even this new *Reader*, containing excerpts from Jones's war writing, seems to take a defensive stance in presenting Jones's case, abandoning his domestic novels to protect the combat core. "Boil Jones down to his war books," I hear the editors arguing implicitly, "then boil those down to their essential scenes, and you'll find a residue that can't be dismissed."

I WOULD DISMISS nothing by Jones, and I find the domestic novels full of overlooked virtues. *Some Came Running* may be the best of these, a bleak tale of hate between two brothers and one of the earliest and sharpest pictures of the postwar boom, when America began to move from Main Street to mall. At the country-club bar on Christmas Eve the businessman brother, Frank Hirsh, sells a crony on what a little wheeling and dealing could do for a pasture near the new highway:

"A big modern ranch-style place built in a right angle—a regular shopping center with space for eight or ten or a dozen stores, and . . . plenty of parkin' space, enough for at least two hundred cars. . . .

" . . . You know what I mean, Clark? A regular village in itself. You could even call it that: *Parkman Village*. . . ."

Go to the Widow-Maker is both lusty romantic comedy and roman à clef. Jones uses a sexual crisis he survived in the mid-1950s as raw material for a love triangle between a playwright, his aging mistress, and his beautiful young wife, and he reports their every emotional twist in the voice of squeamish experience. *A Touch of Danger*, Jones's one attempt at the detective genre, is "a departure," as he called it himself, but done with a good-humored modesty that Raymond Chandler would have applauded. The tone of *The Merry Month of May* seems oddly prim unless we remember that this is not Jones speaking but the narrator, Jonathan James Hartley III, a stuffy bachelor. Hartley thinks he is simply telling how his friends the Gallaghers fell apart as a



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family during the Paris student protests in 1968, but what we see—quite as we might in a Ford Madox Ford novel—is that Hartley's gossiping tongue triggered the tragedy.

The editors of the *Reader* have a point, however: the war trilogy—*Eternity*, *The Thin Red Line*, and *Whistle*—is Jones's masterwork. Jones defined "greatness in art" as "telling the whole truth beautifully, to create catharsis," and in these three fine novels he achieves it, purging himself, in pungent English prose, of all he learned about life as a soldier.

Jones builds his trilogy on one company of soldiers, about eighty men, drawn from every corner of America. Cocky kids at first, stuck at a sleepy Hawaiian outpost, they get drunk and fight over women and points of pride until, at the end of *Eternity*, Pearl Harbor shatters their world. *The Thin Red Line* catches them in the hell of combat, crawling up God-forsaken hills on Guadalcanal, their bellies pressed into the mud to escape withering Japanese fire. In *Whistle* those who don't escape limp home, cocky no more, to cling together in the hushed wards of a Tennessee Army hospital, hoping to heal their scarred bodies and souls.

The three novels cover "a time span corresponding to my own experience," Jones wrote in *Whistle's* introduction, yet far from being a shapeless reminiscence, the trilogy has a structure that in solidity and scope can stand beside Dreiser's *Trilogy of Desire*. As Dreiser follows financier Frank Cowperwood from youth through victorious middle years to the defeats of old age, so Jones follows his soldiers as they progress from innocence through experience to reflection. Dreiser grounds his dramatic curve on geography, using precise pictures of place to make us see Cowperwood moving from Philadelphia to Chicago to London and finally to New York. Jones paints his three locales and the troopships that connect them in equally vivid detail, making us feel every step of the soldiers' long voyage west and then east around the curve of half the earth.

Dreiser, his roots in nineteenth-century realism, writes as an outside observer. Jones, a twentieth-century realist, begins that way but digs progressively deeper into each character's point of view until, in *Whistle*, we see the soldiers' outsides only in short sen-

tences that occasionally bridge long streams of thought. In *The Thin Red Line*, Jones keeps us looking through his soldiers' eyes as they discover both combat's horrors—

What if just as he put up his head another one exploded and a piece of it took him square between the eyes, or knifed into his face, or ripped through his helmet and split his skull?

—and its perverse pleasures:

The truth was, he liked all this shit. He liked being shot at, liked being frightened, liked lying in holes scared to death and digging his fingernails into the ground, liked shooting at strangers and seeing them fall hurt, liked his stickywet feet in his stickywet socks. Part of him did.

Dreiser unifies his huge cast around one character, Cowperwood; Jones unifies his around three, Prewitt, Warden, and Stark. Unlike Dreiser (and unlike Balzac, Trollope, and most other serial novelists), Jones gives the central characters new names in each novel. Jones felt he had to do so because the story of *Eternity* demanded that Prewitt die even though Jones needed the character in the second and third books. His solution was to use slightly different names for the three characters, leaving enough similarity to be a clue to their continuing identity. Thus Prewitt is Witt in *The Thin Red Line* and Prell in *Whistle*. Warden becomes Welsh and then Winch; Stark becomes Storm and then Strange.

Jones was trying to solve a problem, not pose a paradox, but using different names for the same character served his deepest concerns as a writer. From the Emerson quotation that opens *Eternity*, that all history may "be explained from individual experience," to his dedication of *Whistle* to "every man who served in the US Armed Forces in World War II," Jones tried to create characters as real and ornery as the soldiers he fought beside and thereby save them all, himself included, from anonymous death. Prewitt, Witt, and Prell stand proud and distinct, yet they also blend into one another, one containing many, many containing one. Through the paradox, in short, Jones makes the few characters he did name brothers to the unnamed millions.

In the last lines of *Whistle*, dictated as he was dying of heart failure, Jones brought his fellow feeling for soldiers to a climax of nearly unbearable intensity. His prose, always direct and unadorned, becomes sublimely simple. By this time, helplessly unable to cope with the frenetic getting and spending of the home front, Prell has committed suicide and Winch has gone mad. Strange, however, the sad-faced cook who always fed his men, has recovered and is shipping out to fight in France. Pacing the deck of the troopship one night on the North Atlantic, he realizes that he cannot go "into Europe with this new outfit knowing what he knows from the Pacific," and he jumps overboard. His body swells in the cold water, and he hallucinates that he is growing bigger until he is "bigger than the galaxy out in the universe."

And as he swells . . . this picture of a fully clothed soldier with his helmet, his boots, and his GI woolen gloves seems to be taking into himself all of the pain and anguish and sorrow and misery that is the lot of all soldiers, taking it into himself and into the universe as well.

Then he shrinks, back into himself, then into a sea horse, an amoeba, an atom. His last thought: "He did not know whether he would drown first or freeze." □

Brief Reviews



HARD DRIVING by Dermot Cole. Paragon House, \$21.95. The 1908 auto race from New York to Paris was a circulation-raising caper fomented by *Le Matin* of Paris with cooperation from *The New York Times*. There were six entries—three French cars, one German, one Italian, and, at the last minute, one American. The original plan called for an ice crossing of the Bering Strait (Roald Amundsen, when consulted, thought it could be done, given a supply of sledges, folding boats, and pem-

mican), but that lunacy was abandoned. Milder lunacies survived, for the enterprise was not the sort to attract sensible or even reliably honest men. Crews bickered, rules were abruptly altered, cheating was lavishly charged, and the American press held carnival while American roads (frightful) and American weather (appalling) whittled the field down to four. Absurd as the race looked at the time and in some respects still does, it established the viability of cars as long-distance transport vehicles. It also inspired the U.S. government to fix up its roads. Mr. Cole describes the entire trek with an unpretentious efficiency that makes for very good reading.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE REICH by Niklas Frank. Knopf, \$23.00. Mr. Frank is the son of Hans Frank, Hitler's governor-general in Poland, who was hanged for war crimes at Nuremburg. Mr. Frank's letter to his father is an outpouring of hatred and contempt so violent that one is tempted to label it pathological, for quotations from actual documents and diaries are interspersed with obscene and sadistic fantasies and speculations. Frank senior was a good Nazi—a murderer, a party sycophant, a liar, a hypocrite, a pious blabbermouth, a bisexual lecher, and a thief of everything from Gobelin tapestries to 200,000 pickled eggs. He also perpetrated bad verse, but that can hardly be blamed on the Nazis. Detestation of his father is not the whole motive for Mr. Frank's savage excoriation. He believes that the qualities that made Frank senior and the rest of the Nazi brutes what they were remain under the surface of modern Germany—that is, "an ancient, inbred, eternally recurring pleasure in imprisoning, torturing, and killing people." That perception frightens him. His eloquent and often sickening diatribe is an attempt to give a general warning as well as to exorcise his terrible ghosts.

THE DARK SISTER by Rebecca Goldstein. Viking, \$19.95. Henry James, taken seriously as a model, is a dangerous influence. Ms. Goldstein has not taken him seriously. She has pilfered his characters, his family, and his style with irreverent abandon, and tossed them into the novel being written by the protagonist of her own novel. That novel, Ms. Goldstein's, is basically about tensions

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Only a few months ago, the world was able to watch the thrilling spectacle of the airlift of 15,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel. But the rescue of the Ethiopians, heartening and important though it is, is really only a "sideshow" in the ongoing saga of this ingathering. The greatest challenge facing the Jewish state today, almost even more daunting than the implacable hostility surrounding Israel and the ever-present military challenge, is the ingathering of the Soviet Jews.

What are the facts?

■ For years it had been one of the great policy objectives of the United States vis-à-vis the Soviet Union to allow the free emigration of its citizens. Of all the nationalities in the Soviet Union, the Jews are by far the most endangered and the most anxious to leave the country. Finally, the gates have begun to open—a little slowly at first, but then wider and wider. Under U.S. immigration laws, only a small number of these Soviet fugitives are able to come to our country. The vast majority plan on settling in Israel. And that is as it should be. Because the state of Israel has one single purpose: the ingathering of Jews, especially those that are persecuted and who are in need, from all corners of the world. And it doesn't make any difference, of course, whether they are "Europeans" or whether they come from the Arab countries, from Asia or, as now in the case of the Ethiopian Jews, whether they are black Africans.

■ So far, about 300,000 Soviet Jews have arrived in Israel. A total of about 1 million are expected within the next three years. Since the population of Israel is about 5 million, that is equivalent to the United States having to absorb about 45 million new immigrants—more than the population of the states of California and New York combined—and that within a 3-year period! And the United States is a rich country and an immensely large one. Israel is a poor country. Its per capita income is less than \$10,000 per year and more than one-half of the country's budget is dedicated to defense. And it's small: the size of the country is one-half that of San Bernardino County in California. The Soviet immigrants come virtually penniless, because

they may not take more than \$100 out of the country. There are no ready jobs, and there is no ready housing. It is a daunting and almost overwhelming task to absorb these people. It is estimated that it will ultimately cost more than \$50 billion.

■ But Israel is determined to overcome this challenge, to build the 260,000 new housing units that will be needed, to build the 12,000 new classrooms, to create the 360,000 new jobs, and to integrate the 1 million Soviet Jews into Israeli life, just as it has done with over 1 million previous immigrants. Israel and world Jewry will carry virtually all of the cost of this absorption and will create the massive additional infrastructure needed to sustain a population increase of over 20% in just two or three short years. In this fiscal year alone, more than \$6 billion or 20% of Israel's budget will go toward absorption of immigrants. The American Jewish community will have raised more than \$4 billion and has agreed to co-sign a further \$900 million guarantee to help with these costs.

■ There is one urgent matter, however, in which the assistance of the United States will be needed. Israel will ask the United States to *guarantee* (not to grant, not even to lend) \$10 billion for housing, funds that will be needed, in \$2 billion yearly installments, over a 5-year period. This is a financial transaction that is virtually without risk and at virtually no cost to the United States. In contrast to many of the developing countries, Israel has never defaulted on a loan and has never asked for "forgiveness" of any indebtedness. It has a perfect payment record. American guarantees of this \$10 billion loan are absolutely required in order to make the orderly absorption of Soviet Jews into Israel possible.

The matter of the loan guarantees will be before Congress almost immediately. The United States, a country of immigrants just like Israel, has tremendous moral responsibility in this matter. As with all other financial assistance to Israel, the funds under this guarantee will be used only within Israel's 1967 borders. No funds will be used to settle Jews in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"). But the United States must focus on the humanitarian nature of this enterprise. It must not be "linked" and must not be conditioned upon any political issues, such as the procedural questions of the peace process, the question of settlements in the administered areas, or any other "concessions". Israel, like the United States, is a beacon of liberty and of hope. The United States should approve the \$10 billion loan guarantee to Israel—its best friend and staunchest ally in the world—and should assist, virtually without risk and expense to itself, in one of the greatest liberation movements of our times: the exodus of 1 million Soviet Jews and their orderly absorption in Israel.

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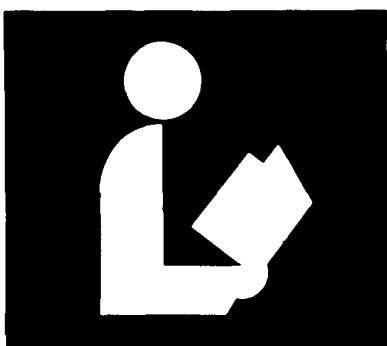
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and influences among relatives—mother and daughters, sister and sister, father and everyone—but it touches on so many other topics that the reader constantly alternates between surprise and curiosity. There is a decided but ambiguous feminist element in the story. The heroine believes her theme to be "How the kinds of gifts that are celebrated in men are seen as ghastly monstrosities in women." Her publisher, a roaringly radical feminist, orders her to "stop being so fucking reactionary." Publishers, reviewers, and agents all draw Ms. Goldstein's satirical fire, as do psychiatrists, spiritualists, advertisers, and a few innocent bystanders. The underlying intention of the novel is serious and the conclusion is macabre, but for most of its length the text is wittily eccentric.

THE TERRORS OF ICE AND DARKNESS by Christoph Ransmayr. Grove Weidenfeld, \$18.95. This novel is constructed in three layers. First there is a narrator, who is trying to find out what became of his acquaintance Mazzini, an Italian author who has disappeared in the Arctic. Then comes Mazzini, who was in the North because of his obsession with the Austro-Hungarian North Pole Expedition of 1873. Finally there is that expedition itself, which never reached the pole but produced records that the author quotes to fine effect, because a number of its members wrote well. (One of them, Sir Julius Payer, cartographer and commander on land, in fact wrote brilliantly of the fearsome beauty of the North and later turned to painting to record it. He was an amazing man and deserves a book to himself.) All these elements—narrator, missing Mazzini, antique expedition—are blended by the author into a discussion of Arctic exploration and an inquiry (predictably inconclusive) into the fascination that has lured to ice and darkness so many men who did not need to go.

CIRCULAR EVIDENCE by Pat Delgado and Colin Andrews. Phanes Press, \$30.00/\$14.95. For ten years Mr. Delgado and Mr. Andrews, both electrical engineers, have been examining the flattened circles and rings that mysteriously appear in fields in southern England. They have measured them, photographed them, and analyzed the various swirling patterns in which crops

are laid low. They have interviewed farmers, barely escaped arrest for trespassing, and listened to reports of UFO sightings, to which the locals seem unusually prone. They have resorted to dowsing and a psychic. They seem to have done everything possible except take deep soil samples (when a surface soil sample was carried home, the burglar alarm became deranged) and study the chemicals used by the farmers on whose land the phenomena appear. (The authors have been approached by scientists from a number of disciplines but "do not readily part with our often hard and expensively gained knowledge.") In addition to the many—often handsome—photographs of the manifestations, this report contains a summation of the theories advanced to account for the crop circles, explanations of the inadequacy of the same, and accounts of similar appearances worldwide. The circles remain provocative and inexplicable, for the only firm conclusion drawn by the authors is that neither wildlife nor human pranksters can be responsible.

BRIEF LIVES by Anita Brookner. Random House, \$20.00. When a novel opens with "Julia died," the reader is entitled to expect something in the way of tension or action, if only a family row over the will. Ms. Brookner provides nothing of the sort. Her narrator, Fay, has to consider herself a friend of Julia's, although she never liked that arrogant, self-centered, slyly catty ex-disease, and assumes that Julia found her boring despite a loose professional connection. Fay had been a promising singer, on radio, of the type of sentimental ballad popular in the 1940s, but gave it up when she fell in love with a handsome, energetic lawyer. The man had a batty and possessive mother and a house decorated in chichi by his divorced wife. Ignoring these impediments, Fay married him, committing herself to a life of meek obedience and suppressed resentment. It may be Ms. Brookner's intention to prove that a heroine who resembles a torpid jellyfish can be made appealing, but if so, it is a regrettable ambition. Julia—by far the best-realized, if also the nastiest, character in the novel—is right: Fay is boring, whether one views her as an individual or as a social specimen.

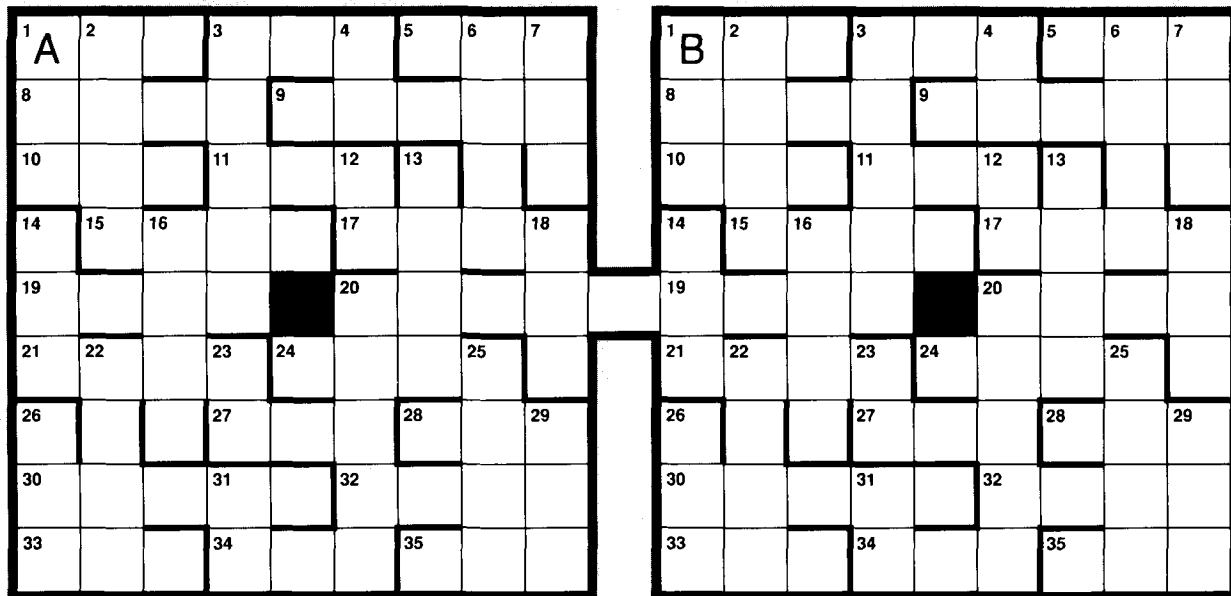
—Phoebe-Lou Adams

THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

MITOSIS

In replicating itself, diagram A shares half its material with diagram B. That is to say, each of the 38 clue answers is split into front and back halves, and each diagram gets 19 front halves and 19 back halves. When the answer pieces have been properly assigned to their diagrams, solvers will find that by adding a letter to the square joining the two, they can spell an appropriate nine-letter word reading from left to right. Answers include two proper nouns.



The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 118.

ACROSS

1. Brainy cryptic split into two parts (6)
3. Weigh undersized Laker? (6)
5. Cut of meat having red vein (6)
8. Draw conclusions about Atlantic coastal city lower down (8)
9. Like some rockets a GI must let loose (10)
10. Talks about bridge's last tricks (6)
11. Corrects me in finales (6)
15. Distrusts religious groups keeping us quiet (8)
17. Pilots aircraft's nose by way of hills (8)
19. Makes bands arrange songs, holding tenor's debut back (8)
20. Andalusian article found in red wine cabinet (8)
21. Cutting show's first audience (8)

24. Chances for some music (8)
27. Get back the heart of Chris Evert (6)
28. Boxing champ spies woman's name (6)
30. In cocktail, brown pigment is resting (10)
32. Studies of geese sex changing (8)
33. Workers run into folks from Warsaw (6)
34. One refusing study—that is right (6)
35. Stop to put a spare on? (6)

DOWN

1. Some hear a bicultural language (6)
2. By bequest, gets into the woman's things? (8)
3. CEOs, by the way, eating liver? (10)

4. Little guy's race time (4)
6. Shining silver trash (8)
7. Endangered lives with king captured by Communist (6)
12. Direction for brewing teas (4)
13. Worker with a van full of rocks, also (8)
14. Pet female auto? (6)
16. Comedy's opening guarantees criticisms (8)
18. Sneaks duck aboard ship (6)
20. Person in an agreement to pace around hot spot (10)
22. Awful ruler's head bone buried in pit (8)
23. Good bit of corn equipment (4)
25. Colder and wetter eels tire out (8)
26. Adult strips, going back in a trance (6)
29. Sort of a bigot, mad as I get (6)
31. Reportedly dug with care (4)

NOTE: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

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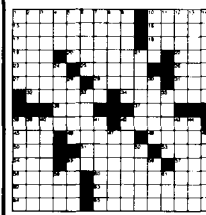
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WORD HISTORIES

Etymologies derived from the files of the Dictionary of American Regional English

BY CRAIG M. CARVER

anathema

Amid a scandal involving First American Bankshares, of which he had been chairman for ten years, Clark Clifford, the consummate Washington insider and adviser to Presidents, was asked why, at the age of seventy-five, he had gone to work for a bank to begin with. "The suggestion of retirement is total *anathema* to me," he said. "I didn't want to go to Florida and rot." *Anathema* (someone or something cursed, shunned, or reviled) is from the classical Greek *anathema* (a votive offering), and means literally "that which is set up." The



word was used in the sense of "offering" in the Septuagint ("Judith offered for an *anathema* of oblivion all the arms of Holofernes, which the people gave her. . . ."—Judith 16:23, Douay version) and appears in English with this sense as

late as the seventeenth century ("Will not permit a [spider's] web—the very pattern, index, and *anathema* of supernaturall wisdom—to remain untouched"—Edward Topsell, *The Historie of Serpents*, 1608). Because a votive offer-

ing can be made not only for good purposes but also for evil ones, in ecclesiastical Greek and Latin *anathema* came to refer to "anything offered or devoted to evil, an evil or accursed thing" ("Neither shalt thou bring anything of the idol into thy house, lest thou become an *anathema*, like it"—Deuteronomy 7:26, Douay). In the Christian tradition, to be accursed is to be cut off from the Church and consigned to damnation—an implication that entered into the meaning of the English word in the sixteenth century. Its figurative secular sense has been common almost as long.



dither

"Across this country people have started to transform the American school," President Bush remarked in a speech earlier this year. "They know that the time for talk is over; their slogan is: Don't *dither*, just do it." The original meaning of *dither* is "to shake, tremble, or quiver" ("So tremulous is she/*Dith'*ring both in heart

and knee"—Horace, *Odes*, in a 1666 translation), from the Germanic root **dud-* (to shake). From this root came several English words, including the Middle English *doten* ("to be weak-minded or deranged by reason of old age," hence *dote*, *dotage*, and *dotard*) and *doderen* (to shake, tremble), later becoming *dodder* and giving rise to the related terms *dadder*, *dudder*, and *didder*. From *didder* ("By his extraordinary chattering and *diddering*, one half of his Teeth dropt out"—*Cyranos de Bergerac's Comical History*, translated by Archibald Lovell, 1687), which is used chiefly in northern England and is the origin of *diddle* (to jerk up and down), came the midland and southern variant in which the pronunciation *-ther* replaced the older *-der*—as it did, for example, in *father*, *mother*, *feather*, and *hither*. It was not until around 1900 that the current sense of *dither*—"to vacillate or act indecisively"—developed, no doubt arising from the tremulousness of someone in a state of agitated indecision ("All newspapers are run by madmen, but the 'Watchman' merely *dithers*"—H. C. Bailey, *Mr. Fortune's Practice*, 1923).

duke it out

"I love *duking it out* with Tom and Dan and Peter." These are not just any Tom, Dick, and Harry but the news anchormen of the three major networks: Tom Brokaw, of NBC; Dan Rather, of CBS; and Peter Jennings, of ABC. The speaker is Bernard Shaw, the anchorman at CNN, discussing his competition: "I talk to them all the time, socially, professionally. We always peel off into some corner when we're together on a story." *Duke*, meaning "a fist," comes circuitously from the title *Duke of York*. The early nineteenth century saw the development of Cockney rhyming slang, in which a word or phrase stands in for something that it rhymes with. For example, *holy friar* means "a liar," *trouble and strife* is a wife, and *Duke of Yorks* are forks. Because fork tines are like fingers and five fingers make a hand or fist, *Duke of Yorks*, or simply *dukes*, became hands or fists. *Duke it out* (to fight with the fists) is from the earlier *put up one's dukes* (1874; literally, "to raise one's fists to fight"). Although most etymologists accept the rhym-

ing-slang explanation of *duke*, it is possible that the term derives from *dookin*, which was gypsies' and thieves' cant for "fortune-telling." *Dookin* is from the Romany word *dukker* (to tell fortunes). Since a common method of fortune-telling was palm reading, *dookin* would have been interpreted as reading one's "dook," or palm, later confused with *duke*.





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I've lived here since I was born; it's my home.

AGE: 31

PROFESSION:
*Graphic/comic book artist,
DC Comics.*

HOBBY:
*"I have more fun than anyone has a
right to. A hobby would just be
rubbing it in."*

LAST BOOK READ:
*Ronan Friesen, The Great Myths.
"They were the first superheroes."*

CURRENT PROJECT:
*Batman #670, featuring the return of
Batman's nemesis, the Joker.*

WHEN DID YOU START?
*If you're talking about me... AND
drawing fantasies, well, ever since I can remember."*

QUOTE FROM YOUR FAVORITE COMIC:
"W !!! %& @!@!"*

PROFILE:
*Soft-spoken, imaginative, dedicated.
Works well in confined spaces.*

HIS SCOTCH:
*Dewar's "White Label," on the rocks.
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Denys Cowan

HOME:
New York, N.Y. "Unlike most people
here, I've lived in Gotham City all
my life."

AGE: 31.

PROFESSION:
Graphic/comic book artist.
DC Comics.

HOBBY:
"I have more fun than anyone has a right to. A hobby would just be rubbing it in."

LAST BOOK READ:
Robert Graves: The Greek Myths.
"They were the original super-heroes."

STATEMENT:
BATH A

WE'VE GOT TO WHIP IT UP. "If you can't make your fantasies come true, why not fantasize about you?"

QUOT
W !!! % @* & @ !!!

PROFILE:
Soft-spoken, imaginative, dedicated.
Works well in confined spaces.

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